

EVANGELICAL NORMAL SERIES,  
TEXT-BOOK No. 7

Divine Origin  of the Bible.

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## THE DIVINE ORIGIN

OF THE

# BIBLE.

- I. INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.
- II. AUTHENTICITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.
- III. BIBLE INTERPRETATION.
- IV. FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY.

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Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,  
and a light unto my path.— Psalm 119: 105.

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# PREFACE

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It has been the object of the editor to make the Evangelical Normal Series, as far as possible, peculiarly Evangelical; with that purpose in view, this volume has been prepared.

The chapter on THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES appeared in *The Christliche Botschafter*, and was translated for this work by Rev. U. F. Swengel, the assistant editor. THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE SCRIPTURES was prepared especially for this volume. BIBLE INTERPRETATION appeared first in the *Evangelical Sunday-School Teacher*, for which it was written by Dr. Huelster. THE FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY was, in part, published in the *Evangelical Messenger*, but was revised and enlarged by the author for this book. Every page of this volume is worthy of a careful reading; it is hoped that it will be the means of establishing a firm faith in the Divine origin of the Sacred Word.

P. W. R.

# THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

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BY REV. R. YEAKEL.

In our day the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is denied by many; by others only an inspiration in part is admitted, while not a few teach various degrees of inspiration of different parts of the Bible. The first of these classes is involved, spiritually, in midnight-darkness. They cannot see beyond that which is human and visible, because their backs are turned upon that which is the true "light on our pathway." The second class manoeuvre around in uncertainty as to what part of the Bible is the Word of God. If only *parts* of the Bible be inspired, and if there be no authority to distinguish between the divinely inspired portions and those of human origin, then we must necessarily walk in uncertainty, and we are as well off, or as unfortunate, as the case may be, as if we had no Bible at all. The third class do not accept the teachings of the Bible itself in reference to this doctrine, as the Bible does not recognize a graded inspiration, but simply perfect inspiration.

In modern times, men—even within protestant denominations—have tampered with this fundamental doctrine of salvation as well as of Christian faith and life, and attempted to cover it with the refuse of human opinions. In view of this fact an effort to throw some light on this supremely important subject may be profitable.

I wish to say at the outset, that I assert that the entire Sacred Scriptures, the Old and New Testaments, as they were written in the Hebrew and Greek languages, are divinely inspired in all their parts, and hence, *as a whole, from beginning to end, are the Word of God.* From this assertion it will be seen that we do not claim that the translations of the Bible are inspired. They were the work of man, and like all other human productions, are more or less defective. There is not a single translation, and in consequence of the differences in the constitution of the various languages, there can be none made, which perfectly expresses the original in every particular. Yet, notwithstanding this, the doctrine of salvation is so fully transmitted even in translations, that for all practical purposes the Bible sufficiently instructs us in the way of salvation, that we may be saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor is any translation free from errors, yet these do in no case affect any vital point of the doctrines of divine truth.

From this it will also be seen that we do not refer to the verbal prophecies of the prophets whom God sent, which, without doubt, were in many cases verbally inspired. The cardinal passage in 2 Peter 1: 19-21, of which the last verse reads thus: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," — refers only to that which was *spoken* by these men of God, but our subject has reference to the *Scriptures*, *i. e.* to what is *written*. It is true that this record includes much that was spoken, but it contains much more that was written only and not spoken, e. g. the historical parts of the Scriptures. The inspiration, of which we write, has reference solely to the *written* revelations of the will of God to men — the *entire Sacred Scriptures*.

After these introductory remarks we shall proceed to treat our subject in the following manner: 1) Prove the entireness of this inspiration; 2) Answer some objections to this doctrine; 3) Define the nature of divine inspiration.— Should this programme seem a little strange, we would remark that this order best serves us in accomplishing our object.

## I.

That the Holy Scriptures are wholly inspired is proven by the most satisfactory witnesses. Of these we will at present avail ourselves of only two.

Paul writes to Timothy, "And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Tim. 3: 15, 16.) By the expression, "all Scripture," the apostle has reference to the entire Old Testament, as it was compiled into a canon by Ezra, as the Jews had it, and as we now have it. It is universally known that the Jews received this canon as having been inspired by God, and hence, as the "Holy Scriptures;" and Paul, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, adds also his testimony that all Scripture, inspired of God, is profitable for doctrine, etc. According to the revised version of the English New Testament, Paul's expression is still more precise. It reads, "*Every* Scripture inspired of God," etc. By this declaration it is pointedly stated that every part of the Old Testament Scriptures is divinely inspired. Paul did not entertain the remotest thought that certain parts of the Scriptures were merely human. His clear comprehension and impartial judgment protected him from being in any sense enslaved by Jewish thought, as is evident from quite a number of circumstances. For this reason his testimony, which from the Jewish stand-point is very distinct and positive, that the Hebrew Canon, in all its parts, is Holy Scripture, is the more important. To Christians it is a fact of special value that the apostle's teaching and writing were with words taught by the Holy Spirit. We have then, the testimony of Paul that "all Scripture" is inspired of God, and at the same time the witness of the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of truth to the same effect.

Another evidence of the highest possible importance is that which came from the mouth in which there was found no guile;

from Him who is Himself the Truth; who came from heaven to declare the truth unto us—the Lord Jesus Christ. God the Father calls to us from the heavens, “Hear ye him!” Yea, amen—speak Lord, for thy servants hear.

When the Lord spake of the law, saying, “Is it not written in your law . . . and the Scriptures cannot be broken.” (John 10: 34, 35), then He spake of the entire Old Testament. When He speaks of the “Scriptures”—as He so frequently does—stating that they must be fulfilled; that they are absolutely authentic and binding, that they testify of Him, He has reference to the same. At times He also designates them as “Moses, and the Prophets,” “Moses, the Psalms and the Prophets,” but they are to Him ever the same Divine Scriptures, which are to be the rule of life and action both for Himself and all men. His most emphatic assertions on this point are the following: “For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matt. 5: 18); “And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail” (Luke 16: 17). From these words of solemn and positive assurance by the Master Himself, we are led to the conclusion that the Old Testament is inviolable, unchangeable and divine. “The Word of the Lord abideth forever.”

Nor are we to understand hereby that certain leading thoughts, or some paragraphs, or that only the words are divine, but the Lord affirms by the expression “verily,” that this divinity includes the *smallest alphabetical character*, even the “tittle” of the law: yea, these shall stand more firm than heaven and earth. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” what the Lord Himself here witnesseth!

The smallest character in the law is the Hebrew letter *yod*, which resembles our comma (,) and the “tittle” is one of the smallest marks of a pen in the Hebrew, and is used in connection with other Hebrew letters. Quite naturally do these little points contribute their part to all that is contained in the Scriptures, and therefore they are included in the sacredness and divinity of the record.

If the Old Testament is inspired of God, the New Testament



is no less divine, as it is the mature and precious fruit which has grown out of the stem of the Old; the latter contains the reality which the former in a great measure merely foreshadowed and prefigured; this latter is to a great extent the fulfillment of the prophecies and promises of the former, and in this respect it is designated as the "perfection" (Heb. 7: 11). Under the new dispensation the Holy Spirit was given to the apostles in a special measure, that He might lead them into all truth. If the Old Testament was the dawn of the morning, or even the morning itself, then the New Testament is the bright midday glory. If there could be a difference, then we would have to believe that the New Testament was more fully inspired than the Old. But this difference does not exist. Even if that which was *spoken* had been more or less inspired, yet the Scriptures, the Record, is simply inspired of God. Next we will give a hearing to a number of objections to what we have above stated.

## II.

The objections presented against the complete inspiration of the Scriptures, that is, against the doctrine that every part of the Holy Scriptures is inspired of God, might be named legion. We propose to discuss a few of those which are the most plausible.

1. "We frequently find in the Bible the utterances of wicked men, and even of the Devil himself, and these cannot possibly have been inspired of God."

Answer: The inspiration of the Bible does not refer to all its utterances, but to the writing of it. All *Scripture* is given by inspiration of God. The writers, whom God selected for that work, were led by the Spirit to record many utterances of Satan himself, in order to reveal him as a liar, so that, seeing him unmasked, we might be able to recognize him in his deceitful approaches. The divine revelation would not perfectly serve its purpose if it did not make known to us the character of this dangerous, fallen spirit. This is true also in reference to sayings of wicked men.

2. "If the Bible were fully inspired it would not contain such

manifest contradictions of known facts, e. g. the sun sets, it rises, it rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race, and the like, since it is proven that the sun does not move, either to rise or to set, and that it is the earth which revolves on its own axis."

Answer: One might meet this objection with the remark that if the almanac were a scientific work it would not say, the sun rises, or the sun sets. The Bible is a revelation of God to the human race. It was not written for scientists, but for all men. If then erudite and scientific works continually declare in the customary language of the people that the sun rises and sets, why should we find fault with the Bible if it does the same? Shall not the Bible also be read by the people? What if the Bible would describe sun-rise in language like the following: When the planet Earth has revolved on its axis to a position which causes the rays of the sun, after they have passed through the intervening space and have been reflected by the denseness of the atmosphere to fall in a tangent direction on the surface of the earth, then the entire solar body becomes apparent at the point of tangency. How many of the twelve hundred millions of men on the earth would know what was meant?

3. "If the entire Bible is wholly inspired of God, why is its chronology in many instances so imperfect, and fragmentary, that the best scholars have found it impossible, to compile a perfectly reliable chronology of the Bible?"

Answer: The Holy Scriptures were never designed to be a chronological text-book.

4. "If the entire Bible is inspired of God, why is it so imperfect in regard to general or profane history, and even differs sometimes from certain details given in profane history?"

Answer: It is not the object of the Holy Scriptures to furnish a history of the world. Its purpose is principally to reveal the fall of the first Adam, and redemption from sin through the second Adam, Jesus Christ, or in other words, to reveal *sin* and *grace*. It merely uses history, or such portions of it, as contribute to its governing purpose, without any reference to their connection with the details of the history of the world. But on this point it is well for us to remember, that

all written histories of ancient times which are now in our possession, are imperfect, faulty, and largely fabulous; if then the Bible occasionally differs from them, it is rather to its credit than against it, as the Bible does not contain fabulous narratives and uncertain statements.

5. "How can a holy, divinely inspired Scripture contain so many contradictory statements, as is the case with the Bible? For example, Mark says, when the women came to the sepulchre on the morning of the resurrection of Christ, they saw a young man who spake to them; Luke says there were two men. The story about the Canaanitish woman is given in two different ways. In one place the circumstance is said to have occurred in a house, and in another place it is represented as having transpired on the street. Similar contradictory narratives and assertions are of frequent occurrence in both the Old and New Testament. The Bible also quite frequently contradicts itself doctrinally, e. g. Paul writes in Rom. 3: 28: 'Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law'; then James says (Ch. 2: 24): 'Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.' No human book can sustain itself amid such contradictions, much less one that professes to be of divine origin."

Answer: There are no real contradictions found in the Bible. Mark and Luke beautifully harmonize. Suppose some one should come to me and say, "Yesterday I saw N. N. at—," which is true. Then comes another who says, "Yesterday I saw N. N. and M. M. at —," (the same place and time). This is also true, as both these persons had been at the place referred to. But the first thought, only one of the men seen was worthy of being mentioned, and the other thought, it was important to speak of both. In reference to the Syrophenician woman, we have reason to believe that the matter referred to commenced on the street, and was completed in a house. Concerning the doctrine of justifying faith, Paul has reference to the penitent sinner who is destitute of good works, and who can be justified only by faith in Christ. But James speaks of the believer who is already justified, whose faith is expected to produce fruit (good works) as evidence of his sincerity. Of the character

first mentioned, we are told how he may become justified without merit (of his own) by grace, through the atonement of Christ. Of the second we are told that, after being justified, if he has true faith, he will bring forth the fruits of righteousness. So we see that the sacred writers do not contradict each other, but on the other hand they supplement each other. This is true of all supposed contradictions in the Holy Scriptures. There are no two writers in the Bible, who, in describing the same occurrence, speak of it in precisely the same manner. The one mentions many points over which the other passes in silence, while the other frequently speaks of that which the first has left unnoticed. So we find almost innumerable differences in the four Gospels, as also in other books of the Holy Scriptures, but these apparent difficulties and contradictions resolve themselves into a beautiful harmony under adequate and honest investigation. And if this were not possible, it is proper to assume that, if we knew all the circumstances of which no mention is made, everything would be clear and easily understood. We have read a number of biographies of Luther, Wesley, Washington and others, which in many points diverge from each other, some relating more, and others less. The same circumstances are described in different ways, but all agree in the principal and essential points. This evidences fairness and the absence of dishonest fabrication. The simplicity and naturalness of the Holy Scriptures are verily a eulogy on their truthfulness and credibility. At this juncture we would introduce an incident, of which we read years ago. On a certain Saturday a number of boys went out of the city to see a paper mill. On the following Sunday their Sabbath-school teacher gave each boy a piece of paper and requested him to write, after their return from Sunday-school, an account of what he had seen on the previous day's visit. All agreed in the principal statement that they had yesterday gone out of the city and visited the paper mill; but to one the beautiful fruit-trees along the street were specially worthy of note; another felt a special interest in the pretty fishes which he saw in the mill-dam; the third wondered at the great power of the water which drove the mill; the fourth was interested in the

magnitude of the building, etc. All agreed in the principal subject, but they all differed in minor details, and yet they all wrote truthful descriptions of what they saw. To a considerable extent the Bible is written in a similar manner.

### III.

Further objections to the inspiration of the entire Bible are presented for our consideration.

1. "If the Holy Scriptures are fully inspired of God, why does Paul explicitly declare that they are not altogether inspired? In 1 Cor. 7: 10 he writes: 'And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord,' etc.; then in the 12th verse he says: 'But to the rest speak I, not the Lord,' etc. Again, in the 25th verse he writes, 'Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord; yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.' Here the apostle declares expressly that he is not writing the commandment of God, but that he is *giving his own judgment*, and thus clearly indicates the difference between the commandment of God and his own judgment. Hence these expressions of his own opinions cannot be inspired, and are consequently of human origin. Besides, the apostle in this chapter gives expression to an opinion which contradicts the word of the Lord, namely: 'It is good for a man not to touch a woman,' and 'He that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.' Although the Creator said: 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an helpmeet for him.'"

Answer: These objections are also failures. When Paul says: "Unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord," and then advises them not to part from each other; he evidently refers to the repeated declarations of the Lord Jesus, who said, "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." For this he had the word of the Lord, already spoken. But in the twelfth verse he gives an advice for which he had received no direction from the Lord, and he gives it as his own judgment; so also in verses 25 and 40. What estimate he put on his judgment in these matters may be gathered from other passages, e. g. "But we have the mind of Christ." "I

think also that I have the Spirit of God." "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." So then Paul writes to the Corinthians from the stand-point of the spiritually minded man, who, as he elsewhere says, "judgeth all things," and from the stand-point of a prophet, and what he writes are the commandments of God. His judgment is, therefore, also the commandment of God, which the Holy Ghost directed him to write. There is only this difference between this and his other sacred writings. He here uses commandments of the Lord which were not previously spoken. We also consider these commandments of the Lord to be inspired!

The apostle does not in anywise contradict the word of the Lord. When he wrote to the Corinthians that it was better not to marry, he remarked it especially as an exception, and gave the reason for it—"for the present distress," during the dreadful times of persecution when they were often robbed of their goods, and the families frequently torn asunder.—Divine laws have frequently also their exceptions. Even to the decree, "It is appointed unto men once to die," there are exceptions. Were not Enoch and Elijah taken to heaven without dying? And shall not the believers who remain on earth until the last coming of Christ be changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump"?

2. "If the Holy Scriptures be wholly inspired, how is it that we meet the undeniable fact that the forty writers of the different parts used their own mode of thought and style of expression? Moses writes like a legislator; the writer of Job is dramatic; David is poetical in his psalms of sorrow and of joy; Solomon on the contrary has only brief proverbs; Isaiah takes his eagle flights; Jeremiah sits down in mourning; and this diversity is continued throughout the twelve minor prophets; every one writes in his own style, through which the peculiarities of his education and circumstances are made manifest. Among the New Testament writers we find Luke the historian, John the theosophical theologian, Paul the dogmatist, and James the practical. The authors of the Bible write in human

style, precisely as other men, according to talent and circumstances, and leave the impress of their individuality on their productions."

Answer: God selected men to write His word for men. The fact that every one of the forty writers used his own style is an evidence that the Word was written for men, whose modes of thought and powers of perception are diversified. This does not in any wise contradict the truth of a complete inspiration.

3. "It seems that these authors wrote principally in consequence of natural or ordinary causes. Paul answers questions which had been sent to him by the Corinthians. The Epistle to Philemon was written in reference to the fugitive slave, Onesimus. Luke had a friend by the name of Theophilus, whom he wished to advise minutely of the life and works of Christ and His apostles," etc.

Answer: These very circumstances were employed under the providence of God, to furnish the occasions for writing those portions of the Scriptures, but they do not in the least invalidate the inspiration of the same.

4. "It is, however, evident that all portions of the Bible are not equally inspired. Who would assert that the genealogical records of the ancient Jews in the books of the Chronicles are inspired to the same extent as the Gospel according to John or the epistles of Paul?"

Answer: We do assert that very thing. Those genealogical records are incorporated into the Old Testament, and transferred in part to the New to prove (besides other purposes), that Jesus of Nazareth is verily and genealogically, in His human descent, the promised "seed of the woman," and the promised seed of Abraham through whom all nations shall be blessed, and also the son of David, of whom the Scriptures predicted glorious things. In these genealogical records there are hidden fundamental truths, as well as in the Gospels and in the apostolic writings. They are as truly inspired as is that apparently human expression of St. John (John 21: 25): "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

"All Scripture," *i. e.* the entire *Holy Scriptures*, is inspired of God, the authors writing precisely what God wanted to have written, no more and no less. They were written precisely in accordance with the will of God, and in perfect adaptation to the needs of men. The personal inspiration of the writers may have varied, but the *record* of the doctrines, history, prophecies, rules of life and practice, etc., are equally divine; for, according to the testimony of the Lord Himself, "it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."

#### IV.

We proceed to consider further objections to the doctrine of the entire inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

1. "If the Holy Scriptures be divinely inspired, why do we find in them such a lack of system? Here we have history, poetry, prose, prophecy, doctrine, exhortation, genealogies, narratives, parables, scattered fragments of chronology, records of wars, of the building and destruction of cities, geography, natural history, etc., all promiscuously huddled together. Even in a child's primer we observe system, so in a grammar and in all human books; but in the Bible everything is in disorder. Can that be a book of which the God of order is the author?"

Answer: God's ways are not our ways—His ways are deeper, higher, better. If we take a ride on the railroad from New York to San Francisco, or if we look at the map of the world, what do we behold? Mountains, valleys, plains, hills, dry land, swamps, stony ground, stoneless prairies, sandy deserts, forests, briars and thorns, beautiful meadows, streams of water which wind a thousand ways in their course, pacific seas, raging waters, etc. If we look at the boundaries of continents and shores of our seas, for instance the coasts of the Grecian Archipelago, or the shape of our North American lakes, we find no straight line, nor triangle, nor square. It looks as if all this were the result of chance, or as if it had fallen upon the surface of the earth without plan or thought. If it were possible for us to create an earth for our dwelling place, we would be likely to secure architects, and apply the line, the



square and the measuring rod everywhere, and would produce an earth-globe absolutely symmetrical, or we would make it so smooth, and decorate it so finely, that there would scarcely be anything left for us to do, and hence we would sink into idleness, which is the source of innumerable crimes. Not so the Lord. He has given to man an earth, which affords an inexhaustible supply of raw and promiscuous materials in which lie hidden thousands of possibilities of development. This conglomeration and admixture constitutes the best practical school for business, traffic, mechanism, art and all other human avocations, as well as for the development of the diversified talents entrusted to men. This world is designed, in a measure, as a training-school of discipline for the human family, as well as a preparatory school for a higher world, and it answers this purpose so admirably that no philosopher has yet been able to intimate any improvement by which the Creator could have made it more perfectly adapted to its useful design. And in reference to size, proportion and weight the earth fits after all so precisely into the planetary system, that this system has been for thousands of years the only perfectly reliable time-piece. Thus we find, when we have probed the matter to its bottom; that this apparent confusion is, after all, the most beautiful adaptation to the purpose for which it was designed. As we now turn to the Bible and examine it, we see that the God of creation is also the God of the Bible. As we continue to "search the Scriptures," which we are commanded to do, we find in them a deep, beautiful, living, internal, harmonious system, which reveals to us the depth of man's fall into sin through Adam, and the great redemption through Christ, in all its degrees and progressive developments. And these Holy Scriptures can, therefore, instruct us in the way of salvation through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. That many a truth must be digged out of this mine, causes them to be highly appreciated, as gold-diggers and pearl-fishers consider their treasures more costly and precious because of the effort that is necessary to secure them.

2. "But if the Holy Scriptures are fully inspired of God, how can they speak to us in such a human style and in the lan-

guage of the common people, adapting themselves to our daily life, giving directions in reference to labor, eating and drinking, raiment, the wages of the laborer and even in reference to the treatment of beasts, and, in a general way, including all the relations and circumstances of life. Should not the Bible, as a *divine book*, be written in a higher style, which, because of its superiority, could with propriety be denominated divine?"

Answer: We repeat, God's ways are not our ways. They are much better, and more adapted to the object in view. Suppose God had commissioned the angels to write for us a Bible in the language of heaven, i. e. in words "which no man can utter," as Paul heard them in his trance when he was caught up to the third heaven, then all men would be compelled to leave this Bible unread, because no one could understand it! But the omniscient God, who "knoweth our frame," condescended to select human agents to write for us His Word in human language, and to reveal divine truth in such a simple manner that the wayfaring man, though a fool, i. e. the unlearned and weak in mind, need not err therein. When God appeared among men as our Redeemer, He did not come in His heavenly glory and majesty, nor even in earthly splendor, but in the deepest humility, as a little child. He became poor and took on himself the form of a servant. He condescended to such a degree that the poverty-stricken, the distressed, the sick, the leprous, poor mothers, weak women, and those who were despised of the world, might find access to Him, hang upon His gracious lips, and receive His blessings. So He also comes to us in the sacred Scriptures. That God who revealed Himself in the flesh, and became like unto us in everything excepting sin, is also the God of the Bible. Moreover, the Bible is not merely to be received as the doctrine of faith, but also as the rule of life, and is, therefore, perfectly adapted to all the callings and changes of life, pointing out those things in our walk and conduct which are approved unto God.

3. "If the Bible is the Word of God, how can it describe sins which create disgust in our minds, and reveal horrible crimes, as those of Lot, David, Peter, etc., and portray such contrary characters as was that of the disobedient Jonah?"

Why not rather cover such things and remain silent about them?"

Answer: As we have before said, the Bible reveals sin as well as grace. It does not flatter and eulogize, but it dissects, lays bare, and perfects faithfully its diagnosis of the disease of sin to the minutest detail, and thus presents it in its practical reality so as to create an abhorrence for it, that we may learn to understand its deep deterioration and be thereby induced to hasten to the great Physician and Redeemer from sin. The Bible unveils also the sins of good men as a warning to all who profess faith in Christ, that they may not also fall after the same example of unbelief. In these revelations of sin it means to say to us, "Watch and pray." A wise theologian says that he had wondered a long time why the disobedience of Jonah is narrated in the Bible, and why this queer man should find a place in the Book of God, until one day in a severe conflict, he discovered in his own depraved nature precisely such a perverse tendency as was in Jonah. Then it became clear to him that the book of Jonah is a portrait in which one may recognize the depraved, contrary nature which we have inherited from Adam, and which in too many instances we have indulged and developed by our own sins. And thus the book of the Prophet Jonah is also an impressive representation of depraved nature, as it manifests itself even in many professing "Christians."

## V.

In proving that the Holy Scriptures in all their parts are divinely inspired, we have already referred to the testimony of Jesus Christ and his apostles. We have also shown that the objections presented against the doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures are not valid. The Bible, then, is the "Book of the Lord," (Isa. 34: 16,) in which He reveals to us His wonderful plan of redemption, and shows us whence we came, whither we are going, the deep depravity into which we were thrown by sin, into what glory the abounding grace of God designs to transform us; it points out to those who are obedient to this word "the mark of the prize," which ever keeps before our

vision God's heavenly calling—a glory and an eternal life of immeasurable importance, whose felicity, riches and blessedness “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have they entered into the heart of man.” This Book also points out to the impenitent sinner the indescribable misery of being eternally lost, to which he will be subjected if he neglects this great salvation and sinfully squanders the accepted time and the day of grace. And, although this book is not specifically a historical work, yet it is the only book sufficiently ancient to inform us as to man's origin and earliest history, and is, therefore, the basis and key to all correct history. Though it is no work on chronology, it furnishes more of it than all profane works are able to present; and although it is not a treatise on astronomy and the sciences, yet it contains astronomical and scientific indications, which have descended even from the earliest times, upon which masters of science look with genuine admiration.

But this remarkable Book is as human as it is divine. With all the inspiration, which pervades every part, one cannot but notice the modes of thought and forms of expression peculiar to the various writers and the different ages in which it was written. It contains popular proverbs in abundance, and in a thousand instances its etymology and syntax accord with popular usages; and although there are to be found in this Book the sublimest effusions of eloquence, yet it contains also matters of the most ordinary and commonplace kind. In its historical parts there are allusions and statements which in modern literature would be considered utterly superfluous. The same is true of its biographical departments. But it is this human, popular, and, in many instances, common form of expression of God's Word that brings it home to the hearts of men. Although given in a fragmentary manner, yet the biblical biographies of Job, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Daniel, Peter, Paul, etc., with their manifold experiences of sorrow and joy, dangers and deliverances, and occasional transgressions and pardon, as well as the remarkable, often typical and prophetic history of the children of Israel, perfectly accommodate this Word to the

circumstances of our life, and fully adapt it to our comprehension and sympathies. As light, air and water fill all space to which they find entrance, so the living Word of God, which is at the same time divine and human, thoroughly pervades man, adapts itself to all his circumstances, and, in every relation, serves to discipline the man of God so that he may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. However, amid the human element of this Word, the divine is predominant and manifest. Even the most commonplace phrases have, in their proper connection, a spiritual and divine value and contain rich treasures of grace and salvation, which one who is truly learned in the Scriptures will seek and find without losing them in extreme allegorical application. For example: Paul wrote, "The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments;" "Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty;" "And every man went unto his own house;" "And his disciples heard it;" "But withal prepare me also a lodging;" "For I have determined there to winter." Hundreds of such passages in their various connections have been transformed into words of life by the Holy Ghost, and we would not part with them for any price.

When God manifested Himself in the flesh and took on Himself the form of a servant, He descended in His humiliation to the greatest depth of human poverty and want. He became a poor babe, a hard-working carpenter, a despised "Nazarene;" He experienced the burdens and temptations, and endured the bitterness and hardships, incident to the life of fallen humanity, so that He might be perfectly fitted and able to succor us in the time of distress, want, affliction and trial. So, when God drew nigh unto us and revealed Himself in His Word, He condescended to human circumstances and language, that He might by it render us needed assistance in all circumstances and conditions of this life. And, as in the God-man the human element was divine and was permeated by the indwelling Divinity, so the human forms, of expression in the Scriptures are spirit and life. Notwithstanding the human, which is so manifest, they are neverthe-

less words taught by the Holy Spirit, and, hence, verily the Word of God.

As the manner and form of the union of the human and the Divine natures in the person of Christ, by which God is manifest in the flesh, is a mystery, so the inspiration of the entire Holy Scriptures, in which the human and divine elements are so intimately combined, is a profound mystery. It is evident that this inspiration did not interfere with individuality of thought on the part of the various writers, but rather stimulated it, and it is just as clear that the Holy Spirit did not dictate the words to be used by the writers, although they wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The writers were not machines, but living, active human beings; they were not like pipes through which the water that is poured into them is again discharged, untouched and unchanged. It is impossible to present a similitude which perfectly illustrates this truth because of the imperfection of the analogy. Inspiration is a work of the Holy Ghost, and spiritual things must be compared with spiritual. Perhaps, however, the following illustration may help us to a better understanding of this matter. Suppose a master of music should be in possession of forty wind instruments, such as trumpets, fifes, flutes, clarionets, etc., all of which are necessary to produce such music as he may desire. It is well known that these instruments are differently constructed, and that the sounds produced by their use are, in accordance with their construction, fine, harsh, loud, soft, shrill, lively, mournful, etc. The blowing (inspiration) is virtually the same with all of them, but the music is varied. And it is a fact not to be misunderstood, that this varied music is produced by the blowing of the musician combined with the peculiarities of the different instruments. We admit that this figure is imperfect, but it does, to some extent, illustrate the principle of inspiration.

In many respects the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is similar to the mysterious workings of divine providence, which, though men suppose themselves to be following their own thoughts, so combines and regulates their circumstances that only angels and divinely enlightened persons may be able to

observe it. Without doubt Luke was unconscious that he was writing Holy Scriptures. Did he not write for Theophilus? Even Paul scarcely knew that his epistles were to be added to the Holy Scriptures. It is quite certain that the compilers of the books of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, etc. did not know that their productions would be placed into the sacred canon. They made extracts and compilations from other Jewish documents, such as the records of the prophets, Nathan, Gad, Samuel and various Jewish writings to which they so frequently refer. But God directed or guided them to make precisely such extracts—and He provided for the preservation of these while the other records were afterwards lost—as were best adapted to show the historical development of the plan of salvation, and appointed the Hebrews as the preservers of them. If Moses, David, Daniel, Matthew, Luke, John, Paul, had known that they were writing the Word of God for all coming generations, that very knowledge would doubtless have embarrassed them almost at every word, so that the Holy Spirit would not have had full freedom in guiding them according to his infinite wisdom and infallible plan. And this fact makes the human part of this Word appear all the more divine in substance, object and adaptation. Although these men wrote for their times and circumstances, yet it was also precisely that which God wanted written for all times and all circumstances. When the authors of sacred Scriptures had written all that could properly serve the purposes of God, they decided in a perfectly human manner, yet under divine direction, to write no more on that particular subject. Take John for an example: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through His name. . . . And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

In reference to this wonderful inspiration, compilation, and preservation of the Word of God—this incomparable treasury,

full of divine wisdom and truth — we may well repeat Paul's adoring expression of astonishment: "Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"





# THE AUTHENTICITY

OF THE

# SCRIPTURES.

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BY REV. W. H. BUCKS.

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That the Bible is of divine origin is accepted by all true Christians. But the fact alone that they accept it as such, does not necessarily, demonstrably argue its authenticity. Even in this matter of the genuineness of the Holy Scriptures, we should be ready to give a reasonable answer to those who ask of us a reason why we believe in its authenticity. An authentic book is one in which matters of fact are related as they really occurred, where the account is not corrupted nor spurious. "The Bible has the same authority and is entitled to the same reverence as though it had been written in heaven by the finger of God, and had been brought down in sight of men and delivered to the world. The Bible is throughout God's Word. God's Word written, as really as if a pattern had been shown in heaven."

Proofs of the authenticity of the Old and New Testaments abound, and while we cannot give them all in this short treatise, and cannot discuss those we do give at such length as might be desirable to some, yet we purpose to give those which are the most forcible and conclusive, and shall aim at perspicuity and thoroughness.

For convenience sake, and as an aid to memory, we might divide the proofs of the divine origin of the Bible, which we

shall offer, into three general classes, viz.: *External, Internal, and Experimental*. Let us look at some of the external evidences first.

1. It is a *divinely inspired* book. Its writers were under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The sacred writers repeatedly assert that they wrote by inspiration from God. This is plainly stated and implied in the following passages, Is. 8: 1; Jer. 2: 1; Ezek. 1: 3. Paul declares the same by specifying passages in his Epistles, "written not by commandment," &c. (1 Cor. 7: 6; 2 Cor. 8: 8; 11: 17), and he claims it in Rom. 9: 1. There are two elements which coëxist in the sacred records—the human and the divine. "Holy men of old spake" (there is the human) "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," (there is the divine). Very instructive here is the resemblance between the combination of the divine and human in the person of Christ and in the Holy Scriptures. Both are expressly called by the sacred writers the Word of God. The first is the Word incarnate; the last is the Word written. Again the manifestation of both proceeded from the Holy Ghost. The first by the way of a miraculous conception; the other by the way of a supernatural inspiration. Next the Son of God came down from above, and took upon him human nature; even so, saving truth was revealed from heaven, and was embodied in human language. Further, in the one person of our Lord two whole, perfect, and entire natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition or confusion. In like manner, the Bible is one book, only one, wherein two elements are inseparably combined in such a manner that the divine does not absorb the human, nor does the human adulterate the divine. In Christ the two natures are so related that he is at once the Son of God and the Son of Man. In the Scriptures the two elements coëxist in such fullness that the whole book is God's Word, and the whole is man's word. In neither case are we able to explain the mode of union; but we are not at liberty to solve the problem by rejecting either of its conditions. For both have demonstrated themselves as such in the effects produced upon the human race. We should bear in mind, however, that in Christ

the manifestation of the divine is personal; but in the Bible it is verbal. Therefore, we worship the incarnate Word as God over all. We do not worship the written Word, but we bow to its authority as the only infallible rule of faith and practice. The whole volume in all its contents and in its entirety, its historical references, its geographical statements, as well as the saving truth revealed from the bosom of the Father through the agency of the Holy Ghost — all these, in their delivery to man and in their record upon the pages of inspiration, were given under the authority of the Holy Ghost. The inspired man's utterance was God's utterance; the inspired man's record was God's record. The utterance is as truly God's utterance, as if God Himself had uttered it; and the record as truly God's record as if God Himself of His own hand had (as He did in the case of the ten commandments) traced its every line.

2. The second proof we find in *prophecy*. Prophecy is a miracle of knowledge, a declaration of something future, beyond the power of human genius to calculate. No uninspired men could predict with such accuracy events, and the detailed circumstances concerning those events, that should occur thousands of years in the future. We have examples upon the pages of history of the utter impossibility of foretelling future events without the direct communication from God. It has produced the wildest fanaticism and spread mischief wherever it penetrated. But the prophets of the Bible predicted events, the truthfulness of which has been verified by facts and subsequent history.

The Bible is full of allusions to all the leading nations, and cities, and institutions that flourished during the centuries of its development. It alludes to trivial detail of domestic life, to modes of speech and modes of travel, and modes of worship; it is full of geographical references, etc., it alludes to governments, to officers, to individuals — in short, it utters prophecies concerning men, and nations, and cities. And such cities and countries as Tyre, Babylon, Nineveh, Jerusalem, Sodom and Gomorrah, Egypt, Palestine, Moab and others, stand as remarkable monuments to the fulfillments of the prophecies concerning them.

The prophecies as contained in the Bible and their fulfillment, as corroborated by history, are numerous, and form a regular system, but it must suffice for our purpose to refer to but a few, to which the student can easily add others.

1) Prophecies concerning the *Jewish nation*. These were very striking. The Jews were God's chosen and peculiar people. He dwelt, by the symbol of His glory, among them. They possessed the only pure and divinely-instituted government in the most compact and cemented condition, hundreds of years. Considering this, human sagacity would have suggested, these people, after the currency of two or three thousand years, will be preëminent, in civil, social, and religious blessings, among the nations of the earth. But Moses uttered a widely-different prediction, more than three thousand years ago. The prophet says: "The Lord shall smite thee with madness and blindness, and astonishment of heart. And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways, and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee. . . . And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee" (Deut. 28: 35-37). This is a remarkable prediction concerning a remarkable nation. You will notice that in the quoted passage three remarkable predictions are made.

First, God will visit upon the Jews a judicial blindness. Second, they shall be scattered among all nations. And third, they shall remain a distinct people, and, as such, be a byword and a reproach. Now, looking at this prophecy at the time it was uttered, its fulfillment must have seemed very improbable, as the Jews were then just entering upon their golden age, and had the culmination of prosperity before them, under the broad seal and banner of Divine approbation and promise. Another thing that seemingly was against the fulfillment of this prediction was, the circumstance, that, according to covenant engagement, all the palmy days of the Jewish nation, stretching through many centuries, must intervene between the utterance and completion of the prediction. And yet, at this very time, the prophecy has a literal and most exact fulfill-

ment. Who does not know, that as a people they are widely dispersed among the nations? Where is that country that does not contain a representation of this God forsaken people? Their name is an odious proverb—their peculiarities are reproachful bywords. Many other prophecies concerning the Jews might be cited and their fulfillment traced out, but the above representative one may do to answer our present purpose.

2) Prophecies relating to the *Messiah*. These are very numerous. It was predicted that he *should* come. Some of the passages teaching and intimating this are: Gen. 3: 15; Deut. 18: 15-18; Is. 9: 6; Ps. 1: 7; Haggai 2: 7. And the following passages indicate their fulfillment: Luke 2: 11; John 1: 14; Gal. 4: 4; 1 John 3: 8.

So also was the *time* when he should come accurately foretold and its fulfillment recorded. Foretold in Gen. 49: 10; Haggai 2: 6-9; Dan. 9: 23-25. Their fulfillment recorded in Matt. 22: 20, 21; Luke 2: 1-5; John 19: 10-25. The *place* of his birth, the *scene* of his activity, the *circumstances* of his sufferings and death, resurrection and ascension, the *descent* of the Holy Ghost were all minutely predicted hundreds of years before the advent of Christ into this world, and exactly fulfilled. For reference see Is. 53d chapter, and Joel 2nd chapter. Then we have Christ's own prophetic utterances. Christ repeatedly foretold the circumstances that should attend his death and resurrection. He predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, with all its preceding signs and accompanying circumstances.

The generation unto whom he uttered those terrible predictions lived to be the eye-witnesses of their accomplishment. Josephus, the Jewish historian of accepted ability and credibility substantiates the truthfulness of the fulfillment of this prophecy.

3. The third evidence we find in the *miracles wrought*. The word *miracle* means literally any event so extraordinary or strange as to excite wonder or astonishment. Every miracle is indeed worthy of wonder, but not every wonderful occurrence is a miracle.

Thus we sometimes speak of the miracle of nature when, in

the Spring of the year, the trees, grass, etc., spring into new life. But in no such contracted sense would we use the term miracle upon which we base the authenticity of the Scriptures. A miracle according to the Bible significance, must have a definite import; it must mean something to those for whom it is wrought. For this reason miracles are so often called *signs* in the Scriptures. Uncommon events we call miracles. The raising of the dead, the instantaneous restoration of the blind to sight, etc., are examples. It is but reasonable to suppose that a divine revelation should have the support of miracles. He who has power to *establish* the laws of nature, can by the same power *suspend* them at pleasure, or put them by his own infinite skill and power into such relations that extraordinary results will be the outcome.

These miracles are God's *seal*, by which he proves his communications Divine.

The miracles recorded in the Bible are established facts, supported by as good evidence as any other historical facts are. They were wrought publicly, and were *never* disputed by those among whom they were performed, and certainly those who witnessed them were the best judges; for they heard the dumb speak, and saw the blind restored to sight, and the dead raised to life. They were even admitted by those who rejected the revelation which they authenticated. For reference see John 9: 24; 11: 47; 12: 9-11; Matt. 12: 24. Then there is another fact that we should not forget. It is the great variety of these miracles as they were wrought as recorded in the Old and New Testaments. The deaf, blind, dumb, maimed, sick, insane, and the dead were the subjects upon whom they were wrought. And besides, they covered a period of years that gave ample time for them to be examined and re-examined. Many of them really were examined. See Luke 8: 2; Matt. 4: 23, 24; John 12: 1, 2; 9-11.

The Old Testament Scriptures contain at least fifty-four miracles, embracing a vast variety in the display of omnipotent power. Most of these were wrought in a way and at a time, that they are absolutely necessary to account for the existence of the Jewish nation; so intimately are they inter-

woven with their origin and history. The New Testament contains at least fifty-one miracles. They are necessary to give us a connected, unbroken and complete Gospel narrative. They are closely interwoven in the history and redemptive work of our divine Lord. Beyond all doubt, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the crowning miracle, the miracle of miracles recorded in the New Testament. Of truth we may say, that it comprehends in itself all the other mighty works chronicled in the Gospel history. It is observable with what condescending care our Lord himself certified to his disciples its reality. That he died is a fact. And that he was buried cannot be denied, his sepulchre is even to this day pointed out to the tourist. He arose from the grave. This is denied by some. That the grave into which he was put was empty after the third day is corroborated by the statement of his enemies, who tried stratagem by which to account for his removal from the sepulchre. There are but three ways by which we can account for the removal of his body from the tomb: By his enemies, by his friends, or by himself. That the first two did not take it away is very evident. That he *got up* by his own voluntary power is plain from his own predictions. "After three days I will rise again" (Matt. 27: 63). "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10: 18).

That Christ really arose, we have the further proof, that he appeared twelve distinct times after his burial to many witnesses. Five on the first day, and five more before his ascension, and once to Saul of Tarsus at his conversion, and once to John on the isle of Patmos.

4. The fourth evidence we find in the *wonderful preservation of the Scriptures*. Questions like these, naturally come up in the mind. Do we have the same record which was made at first? What proof is there that we have the identical book which was used eighteen hundred years ago? These questions are pertinently answered by a modern writer. He says, "From numerous ancient manuscripts now in existence; from the quotations from Scripture, and references to it, which are found in the writings of the early fathers and in the rabbinical paraphrases;" from the ancient versions both of the Old and the

New Testament; from the decisions of early and learned councils; from the jealousy and watchfulness of opposing sects, all of whom base their faith on the same Word of God; from the reverence and scrupulous care of the copyists of the Holy Scriptures in all ages, and from the unimportant character of the "various readings" found in the manuscripts of Scripture now extant, we are safe in concluding that our Bible does not essentially differ from the Bible of the primitive Church. There is better authority for believing the Bible to be genuine than for accepting as such the writings of Herodotus or Virgil." Dr. Lardner says "that Tertullian, an eminent theologian in the Church of Carthage, who died A. D. 200, made quotations from the New Testament, which are "both longer and more numerous than are the quotations from all the works of Cicero, in writers of all characters for several ages" The Jews from the beginning preserved the Old Testament with sacred diligence. To the tribe of Levi, according to Deut. 31: 25, 26, was the book of the Law entrusted. To take all possible precaution, extra copies were carefully stored away in the archives of the temple, to which no one had access (see 2 Kings 22: 8; Acts 15: 21).

The manuscripts were transcribed with great caution and exactness. We are creditably informed that in order to carefully guard the manuscripts against corruption, the alteration of a letter would condemn the copy to the flames. The Jews recorded the number of words and letters in each manuscript, and marked the middle letter as a safeguard against corruption. The *Septuagint*, which embraces the translation of the whole of the Old Testament from its Hebrew and Chaldee into Greek, was translated over 2000 years ago, and is claimed to be still extant. The oldest manuscripts of the New Testament and of the Greek versions of the Old are nearly 1500 years old. Of these, the Alexandrian is now in the British Museum, and the Sinaitic, discovered at Mount Sinai in 1859, is in St. Petersburg. The Bible has been subjected to the most critical examinations of the above and other manuscripts by the most eminent scholars, and yet they have found a substantial agreement in them of all. During the first few centuries false Gospels



abounded, but these were shortlived. How truthful in the light of Scriptural facts as established by history, is the remarkable prophetic utterance of Gamaliel, "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God" (Acts 5: 38, 39).

If the Jews had tampered with their Scriptures, they would have erased the record of their own crimes, idolatries, and rebellion against Jehovah. Bengel said to one of his students: "Eat the Scripture bread in simplicity, just as you have it, and do not be disturbed if here and there you find a grain of sand which the millstone may have suffered to pass. If the Holy Scriptures, which have been so often copied, were absolutely without variations, this would be so great a miracle that faith in them would be no longer faith. I am astonished, on the contrary, that from all these transcriptions there has not resulted a greater number of various readings." It is impossible to account for the existence of the Bible except on the theory that it is Divine. It is supreme folly, for any one to suppose that it is here by chance, human deception, or even human wisdom.

It is unlike all other books in its claims, influence and history. A celebrated author says, "The integrity of the Holy Scriptures is substantiated by evidence tenfold more various, copious, and conclusive, than that which can be adduced in support of any other ancient book, even the most highly prized Greek and Latin classics." The Bible has often been condemned, and burned, but it still lives and will survive the dissolution of worlds. Works of art, science, and so-called philosophy and ridicule have been arrayed against it, but it is to-day, after centuries of the most virulent criticism, the most precious book in the world, and has proved itself to be *the* book for the culture of man. Like Jesus Christ, it has passed through the blood and tyrannies of centuries, marched across the ages, and stands to-day in the estimation of many nations, as the book that teaches the highest morals, the purest ethics, the profoundest philosophy, and the highest form of belief, and the only book that contains saving truths for the soul.

Secondly, let us look at a few internal and experimental evidences.

1. *The beautiful unity of its various parts.* At first sight, certainly, the Bible appears to us as little likely to possess a true and positive interior unity as any book which exists in the world. It contains sixty and more separate treatises or pamphlets, some of them longer and some shorter, written by nearly forty different persons, in widely different stages of civilization and periods of time; some of them separated from each other by nearly as long an interval as that which separates us to-day from the beginning of the Christian era. These pamphlets were written in three different languages, in different lands, among hostile peoples, and comprising the greatest possible differences of literary style, and of general or special intellectual culture. These different papers put together by the binder, appear at first sight to possess no possible harmony whatever, yet when being examined we are at once impressed by the positive oneness of doctrine, which is found pervading them, from the beginning to the end, and really manifest in every part. The book contains a statement of doctrine, continuous, progressive but essentially one, even as the mind of God is one, and cannot possibly be self-contradictory. It is a vast unity, of course; as it must be to correspond with the mind of God, from which it proceeded. It is the unity of a great book, crowded with immense thoughts and precepts and not of a particular argument. So, too, it is an organic and a progressive unity, not to be wholly searched out or comprehended until we have finished the entire volume through which we have traced it. Think of the wide range of subjects it treats of, entering at once into the various relations of time and eternity, character and destiny, God and man. Yet in all these multiplied parts what a beautiful harmony, like unto the colors in the rainbow, and the persons in the Trinity. Where is there another book like it in this respect?

2. *The subject matter of the Bible and its character.* It is emphatically a book of acts and of doctrines. Its doctrines and its facts are so related to each other that they stand or fall together. If the miracles are untrue, the teachings based

upon them are untrustworthy. But the facts recorded in the Bible do not exist in theory only, but they are indisputable facts.

It is a book beyond the power of man to produce. No human being could paint such a pure and majestic life as that of Jesus Christ, if no such life had ever been exhibited on the earth. It treats of the sublimest subjects, and in a most positive manner.

3. *The simplicity of its whole design.* There is one simple underlying object from beginning to the end, and that is, *a history of the redemption of our race by Jesus Christ.* The fall of man and his redemption in Christ, are the pivotal points or facts of the entire revealed will of God. But this one thought, having so many different phases as brought out in the Sacred Book, and the entire history being written by about forty different men, living in different centuries, strangers to each other, and without consultation or comparison should produce such an accurate account, herein the *uniform object* appears the more remarkable.

4. *It being in accord with the book of Nature.* The Bible is a companion of Nature. The suggestions of Nature concerning the Creator are supplimented by the revelations of the Bible. The Bible and Nature are two volumes of the same Book. In point of time, Nature is part first, and the Bible part second. When Nature suggests that God is a being of taste, artistic skill, power and wisdom, the Bible confirms it. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." When the Bible teaches that God is the Creator of the material universe — all things, Nature responds that each effect must have an adequate cause. Nature suggests that the Author of our being is *most benevolent in his character.* The Bible agrees, for it says, "God is love." The Bible, of course, leads us into truths that Nature cannot reveal. Such as, God is holy, man is immortal, that sin is an *infinite evil*, which can only be counteracted and blotted out through faith in Jesus Christ. But there is a beautiful harmony between the Bible and Nature.

Bishop Butler in his Analogy pertinently says, "that all the

objections against Christianity may be as strongly urged against the constitution and course of Nature, which all, except Atheists, admit proceeds from God."

5. *In the anticipations of the Bible to our demands and the adaptation of the Bible to the universal needs of the soul.* Though every statement of the Bible contains unalloyed truth, because uttered by inspired lips, yet God does not stifle the intellect and discourage investigation, by imperiously demanding faith in a group of propositions, but supports every assertion of His word, containing a cardinal principle by proofs adapted to convince the judgment. The very demand to know its authenticity was anticipated, and, therefore, God has founded all the cardinal principles and practical duties of religion in the deepest philosophy. They lie at the foundation of civil and social order and happiness. Denounce the Bible as fiction, and yet, let society act on principles contrary to the ethics of this book, and the earth would be a scene of violence, destitution, licentiousness and extreme wretchedness. The practice of the principles of the Bible, brings personal peace, social peace, domestic peace, national peace. Ignore the principles taught in the Bible, and there can be no individual, domestic and national security. The Bible is perfectly adapted to the wants of man. No other book has ever done this, no other book can do it. Man needs a knowledge of God, of law, of character and of destiny. Nature cannot furnish this knowledge. It is in vain for man to think by searching to find out God. Eminent scholars, under favorable circumstances, with ample resources, of means, time and literature, failed to find God.

Man needs a revelation of God and divine grace. In Jesus Christ we have such a revelation, the highest conceivable manifestation of Jehovah and sovereign grace, and this is revealed in the Bible; and with the revelation of Jesus Christ, we have the manifestation of law, grace, character, destiny. The Bible meets the demands of our complex nature. It is the source of truth to the mind, of peace for the conscience, of light for the valley of the shadow of death. It lays hold of man's fallen nature with power to lift him out of the defilement of sin and

raise him into the presence of God. Man finds, when he comes to this Book in the attitude of an inquirer and learner, that it answers his deepest questions, enlightens his darkest hours, and puts a new joy into his heart. This adaptability is expressed by St. Paul, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Its words are adapted to our individuality, peculiar circumstances and needs. Whoever trusted fully in the Bible, and was confounded? Whoever came sincerely to this blessed Word for comfort and guidance and failed to find them? Who has not been made better by cheerfully surrendering himself to its teachings? It ennobles character, and guides into all truth. When Webster, the great statesman, lay dying, he said: "Put the Bible under my pillow, for I want to die with my head reposing on the book that guided my steps so faithfully in life."

Ah yes, millions have tested it in life and in death, and found it suited to their real needs. It is a book for all nations, adapted for all grades of society, and meets and satisfies the highest aspiration of the soul. Perhaps the most vexed question that comes to the human mind is, "If a man die, shall he live again?" The Bible not only inspires a hope of a future immortality, but answers the puzzling question with the most positive affirmative answer, and thousands have died a triumphant death, buoyed up by that hope of immortal life revealed in the Bible. And that system or truth in its marvelous and varied diversity, which makes it a voice to every heart; its comprehensive scope and range, which touches life at all its points; its soul-sustaining hope, which shines upon the sepulchre, and makes the grave "a pathway to the skies;" I say such a system of truth which affords such support and consolation to one who stands on that last low verge of earth, is by that very fact commended to the confidence of the race.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

## BIBLE INTERPRETATION.

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BY REV. A. HUELSTER, Ph. D.

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*"Understandest thou what thou readest?"*

Thus Philip inquired (Acts 8: 30) of the eunuch of Ethiopia, on his return from Jerusalem. He had been reading Isa. 53, one of the weightiest passages of the Old Testament. A very good thing, indeed; that he was reading the Bible at all, and especially that he was reading so wonderfully significant a part of it; but after all, it would have availed him little or nothing, if he had not been led to understand it. To see so many Sunday-school scholars engaged in the reading and studying of God's Word is, indeed, highly gratifying. If rightly guided, they cannot help finding such exercise interesting in the highest degree. They find therein even that element which their youthful minds prize so highly, viz., that of fiction, but only in the sense that truth is stranger than fiction, and really imparts to the latter its fascinating charm. Still, they may be interested like the eunuch was, and may become able to repeat parts of Scripture by rote, and even to relate the story of Jesus simply as a tale to be told, without deriving a lasting benefit therefrom for their life's betterment and their soul's eternal welfare. The blessings intended to be conveyed can spring only from a right understanding of the Scriptures. "Understandest thou what thou readest?" is, therefore, the proper question for the Sunday-school teacher to ask, and it would be entirely in keeping with the circumstances, if the scholar, like the eunuch, would respond, "How can I, except some man

should guide me?" The teacher, as a matter of course, should be far ahead even of advanced scholars, and they should find it perfectly natural to look up to him for counsel and direction.

The teacher, then, is to play the part of Philip, and be the guide. Now, if he would be a true guide, he must, of course, know the way; if he would rightly solve the perplexing queries of inquisitive minds, and adequately explain the difficulties of inquiring hearts, and propound the proper solution the Bible offers to anxious souls, he must himself fully understand the explanation, and must be able to give it.

How readest thou, *what* is the interpretation? is, after all, about the most important question possible with reference to the Bible. That rich young man (see Luke 18: 18-27) knew the words of the commandments very well, and could perhaps repeat a large part of the Old Testament Scriptures *verbatim*, but, nevertheless, he did not know their meaning; it had never dawned upon his mind that the second table could have such an import. Continuance in such ignorance would as certainly have sealed his doom as willful neglect to follow out the behest of our Lord. Of course the doer of the Word is the one who will be saved, but it is impossible to do a thing aright unless you know how to do it. Certainly it is the duty of the preacher and the Sunday-school teacher to incite to action, to arouse the latent energies of the soul to activity, to prevail on his hearers, his scholars, to shape their lives according to the teachings of Holy Writ; but he can do this intelligently and successfully only upon a sound and thorough explanation of the principles which are to guide their action, a clear setting forth of the meaning of God's Word, which is to be a light in the darkness and a lamp unto their feet. The principal thing, then, the Sunday-school teacher has to do is to expound, explain, unravel and elucidate the meaning, *i. e.*, *teach* the Word of God.

The importance of comprehending any word, or precept, or command, or doctrine, or book, stands in direct relation to the author thereof. A book on a scientific subject, from the pen of one who is known to be but a poor scholar, will merit very little attention; the command of a person having no authority will hardly be carried out; the precept of one not apt to teach

will not likely be followed; the word of a man knowing nothing of the legal relations subsisting between men, and not clothed with the ermine of legal authority, will hardly become the law of public action; but how people are bent upon hearing what a great orator has to say — anxious to see the solution of a vexed scientific problem by one versed in all the intricacies of science — eager to listen to the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States regarding a law touching the public weal! What unique attention, then, what earnest consideration, what dutiful reverence, what implicit obedience, should the Holy Scriptures receive, touching, as they do, the highest welfare of man; treating of subjects grand beyond comparison; speaking with an authority far above all that is human; laying bare the most stupendous problems of time and the grandest realities of eternity; uttering, as they do, the thoughts of God himself and the very outgoings of his loving heart! We may be satisfied to observe in nature the greatness, the power, the wisdom of God, the beauty of his ways, if we do not understand the whys and wherefores, and hows and whens; it is but the outer court of his revelation, and may suffice its purpose without an erudite knowledge of the wonderful problems it presents for man to study and think out. But in the Bible we have the most holy place of God's revelation; we see God's heart open before us in unspeakable love; we see him condescend and become one of our number — the Word made flesh, the Son of God made the Son of man; we behold the mystery of the Cross revealed, our redemption wrought, God taking us into fellowship and union with himself through his Son in the Holy Ghost — *i. e.*, we see, behold all this if we rightly comprehend the meaning and intent of the Bible. How closely, then, we should study it, how eager we should be to find out its right interpretation! You listen politely to what a stranger has to say, with due respect to one in authority, but with the esteem and love of your heart to the words of your friend in whom you have implicit confidence. Does not God speak to us in his Word as our best Friend, our most trustworthy Counselor, yes, our loving heavenly Father; and should we, therefore, not listen with earnest attention, endeavor to



catch the meaning of every word, and to receive into our very heart the import of his teachings?

If what has been said thus far is sound, the science of Bible interpretation — called also Sacred Hermeneutics — is, beyond contradiction, one of vast importance, since it makes us acquainted with the rules and principles according to which the Bible must be explained, interpreted. The more certain these principles are, and the better substantiated, the more implicitly must they be followed in order to a correct and full interpretation. If they are not followed, or obeyed but in part, the interpretation will, of necessity, be erroneous and faulty in a like degree.

Of course, any book must be explained, if one is to understand it. If it is very simple, a single perusal may be sufficient to mark its import; in that case the rules of interpretation are unconsciously complied with, and are so easy and self-evident that they compel no special effort in order to their application. In some respects the Bible would seem to be of very easy interpretation, seeing that it is so largely made up of history. However, even this history, though easy of comprehension in one respect, often has a profounder signification than appears on the face of it; and, in order to arrive at this hidden meaning, something more is necessary than simply to view the narrative as a literary production giving the history, in the common acceptance of the term, of an individual or a nation. Bible history is largely of this nature. It treats of individuals and nations not as profane history does, but from a higher point of view, and whosoever is not capable of taking in this higher point of view, can never get at the heart of the Bible's meaning. For this reason the Bible is considered, of all books, the most difficult to interpret. It is not only human, but also Divine, and its proper interpretation necessitates, in the interpreter, a union of these two elements. Its human side is subject to the same laws and methods of explanation as is any other literary production of a corresponding nature, but its Divine side can be clear only to him whose eyes have been enlightened by celestial light. He who possesses only the latter qualification, however, cannot be a trustworthy guide any

more than the one who is in exclusive possession of the former qualification; the one would be apt to lose himself in the labyrinth of mysticism, and the other would be in danger to resolve even what seems most profound into the clear daylight of a superficial rationalism which throws aside as worthless whatever does not suit its common-place fancy. He who possesses the two in the highest degree and in perfect harmony, is, of course, the better interpreter of God's Word; and he of whom such a union can be predicted in the next high degree is the next best interpreter. In Christ we find the two in absolutely perfect union, and he is, consequently, the absolutely perfect Expounder of God's thoughts concerning man; the apostles, especially Paul, rank next; in fact, the principal object with us is to get at God's thoughts as stated in their language.

Now, what are the principles of interpretation? We might, perhaps, commence at either end, and still give a correct and full answer. It makes but little difference whether you begin at ten and count backwards to one, or *vice versa*, if only you don't slip, for in that case you might possibly be the loser, supposing dollars and cents, or something else of value to be involved. Still, the question of interpretation is not exactly one of arithmetic, and the best mode of answering depends, to a great extent, on what a person has already said. It will certainly be a wise manner of procedure, and conducive to clearness of comprehension, to begin with what most naturally follows from the foregoing.

There is a theory abroad at present, that there must be no predisposition of any kind in one approaching the sacred text; that he must be inclined neither *pro* nor *con* with regard to its meaning; that he must remain perfectly neutral, and not permit the contents to exert any undue influence upon him; that he must, in a word, remain perfectly cool, and let impassionate judgment wield the scepter of impartial criticism.

A useless demand. It is impossible to deal with the sacred text in a neutral state of mind. In the Bible you tread upon the sacred ground of religion, and in religious matters no one can be neutral in the full sense of that word. A man has, by a long process of endeavor, it may be, either fortified himself

against all religion and will then find in the Bible human history simply and the play of human ingenuity, or he is still more or less religiously inclined, and his interpretation will be of an accordant nature. Even the critic whose aim is solely to establish the most correct text by the aid of the most reliable manuscripts will, unconsciously, perhaps, but none the less real, be influenced in his judgment by his religious conviction. But suppose the modern critic can perform his task of dissecting the text with perfect equanimity, without the slightest show either of sympathy or aversion, that does not go to prove that the preacher or Sunday-school teacher can arrive at the meaning of God's Word in a like manner. The teacher is to be a Christian, a man of faith, who himself has experienced the saving power of Bible teaching. He is bent upon finding out the mind of the Spirit on the pages of Holy Writ. Not what he would have it say does he want to find out, but what it actually does say — the sense of God's Word for mortal man. The desire to know the truth, the whole truth, is uppermost in his heart, and he must, therefore, be in full sympathy with the truth. To find out the mind of the Spirit, he must himself have this mind of the Spirit.

#### FIRST PRINCIPLE.

*Heartfelt sympathy with the Spirit of revelation* is the first principle of Bible-interpretation.

How can a man become a naturalist if he is not a lover of nature? Would he be likely to inquire into its mysteries and be able to read their hidden language? What right have men like Apelles and Raphael to be styled *great painters*? Is it not because their apprehension and conception of the beautiful was incomparably greater and grander than that of their fellows, because they were really in love with the beautiful in nature, and could, consequently, reproduce it in the glowing colors of a living reality? Does not a poet understand poetry best? Well, then, other things being equal, a Christian understands the mind of Christ best. The more intimate your fellowship with Him, the more fully will His inner life be revealed unto you. Abraham was called the "friend of God," and, as

such, he was favored with special revelations from heaven. To his friends Christ revealeth all things he has heard of his Father (John 15: 15). His Spirit is to teach us all things which pertain to our salvation, he is to give us right conceptions of Christ's person and work, he is to reveal Christ in us and the import of his redemption. Now, since all Scriptures testify in a certain sense, more or less distinctly, of Christ, the more one is imbued with the Spirit of Christ, the better will he be able to interpret the sacred pages. His own life being hid with Christ in God, and part and parcel of the same life which is aglow in the Bible, it is but natural that he should be able to unfold it in all its beauty and loveliness.

As Sunday-school teachers, then, let us pray earnestly for the enduement with the Spirit of Christ, for then we shall be in sympathy with the Spirit of revelation, and be able rightly to divide the Word of truth unto the salvation of our scholars.

This principle enunciated, then, might be styled *congeniality with the spirit of revelation* or *with the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures*. Inspiration is the distinguishing characteristic of the Bible, that makes it the Book of God, and not only a book of men. Evidently, then, a belief in such origin, a devout condition of heart regarding such inspiration, humble docility of mind in relation to its teachings, are indispensable to a due appreciation and right understanding of its contents. He who himself is imbued with the spirit of the Bible will best be able to set forth what this spirit has to say to mortal men on its sacred pages.

#### SECOND PRINCIPLE.

The second principle I will style, *congeniality with the individuality of the different authors of the Bible*. No two men are alike, even physically. Inspect a throng of a thousand men, notice each individual face, and observe their characteristic particularities: you will, perhaps, see faces that resemble each other considerably, and still you will not find even two exactly alike. Now, is not generally the external a token of the internal, and is it not likely that their intellectual characteristics differ fully as much? Is it not every way the

most rational supposition that the authors of the Bible exhibit the same intellectual differences, like other men, and that these differences appear also in their writings? Or are they merely to be considered as the penmen of the Holy Spirit, who simply put down, as he dictates, in which case they would be passive instruments, and would of course have no room for the play of their individuality? The Holy Spirit sanctifies the individual peculiarities of men now, in order to use them to the good of Christ's kingdom. Should He have treated these holy writers differently?

These writings are proof sufficient that He did not. How marked, e. g., the difference both in matter and form between the first three and the fourth Gospel! The first three Gospels have many points of resemblance, so many incidents and events which they narrate being identically the same; and still, even where they have the same subject-matter, how characteristic the manner of treatment and the coloring each one has unconsciously given it! The Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew and Luke, and the temptation of Jesus, found in the three, sufficiently elucidate my meaning. Or have you never observed what a marked contrast there is between the Epistles of Paul and those of Peter, and then, again, of both to those of John? Or, turning to the Old Testament, do you think the Holy Spirit selected at random an Isaiah or an Ezra for the work respectively he wanted them to perform? Could the lofty spirit and holy fire of the former have confined itself within the narrow limits of endless genealogies and dry historical facts, with which the latter had to busy himself? Never!

Well, then, to interpret their writings to the best advantage, it is necessary to understand their individuality and to have caught their spirit. Does not the business man best understand the business man, the legislator his brother legislator, the poet his fellow poet? The judicial mind, then, will be likely to understand the legislative portions of the Pentateuch best; he who is inclined to take a profound view of life, and to trace the mysterious ways of Providence, will best be able to follow the prophet's searching truths, and to view his descriptions of an inglorious or grand future; and the born poet of course will

most delight in and appreciate the beauty and sublimity of nature and nature's God, and the musings and inner longings of the soul as depicted by David and Solomon. This is the reason, that one man seldom undertakes to write, all alone, a commentary on all the books of the Bible, but he selects as his special work those most congenial to him, and assigns the rest to associates specially adapted to their task respectively.

"But what am I to do?" I hear a Sunday-school teacher inquire. "I am no business man, nor prophet, nor poet, and still am called upon to interpret in all these departments of the Bible." Do the next best thing. When you come to Isaiah, try to be as much of a prophet as you can; when to Ezra, as much of a business man as possible; when to John or Paul, endeavor to be a good theologian. Sit at the feet of each one of these men, listen attentively to what they have to say, and observe how they say it; try to catch the inmost soul of their utterances, the peculiar spirit enlivening and pervading them; and then it will be comparatively easy for you to know what they mean in any particular passage. If, however, you find that you are not prophet or poet enough to unravel the meaning of the prophet or poet, why, then, go to some "secondary" prophet or poet who has tried his hand at explanation, and let the new light thus found shed its luster on the sacred page, for your own enlightenment and that of your class. Be careful, however, not to parade in the borrowed light, but let the borrowed light become so thoroughly one in your own mind with the original light of the sacred page, that your pupils may see you only encircled by the glory of the latter.

#### THIRD PRINCIPLE.

If the individuality of any of the sacred authors is not obliterated, but rather purified and elevated to a higher plane of thought by the influence of the Holy Spirit upon him, then, certainly, this fact will manifest itself upon his written page. He will see Divine truth in human form, and will have his peculiar way of expressing it. Even with God, one truth is undoubtedly of more importance than another. Should it be otherwise with man? But God can see all truth, and all truths

at once, by one grasp of his all-comprehensive mind. Man can comprehend only a small part of truth at one and the same time, and must see the relation of one truth to the other, in order to arrive at a just estimate of each. If it had not been necessary, in the interest of those to whom God originally revealed himself, it was nevertheless necessary to the right understanding of the Bible, that we should everywhere meet with a process of thought which we can follow.

We might expect that each one of the sacred authors had a peculiar object in view in penning his book, and this object gives a peculiar coloring to his work. We may safely lay it down as a maxim, that a leading object or idea runs through each one of the sacred books, which diffuses over it its peculiar light, makes it resonant with its characteristic tone. It has also been called *scope* or *design*. "The scope is the soul or spirit of a book, and that being once ascertained, every argument and every word appears in its right place, and is perfectly intelligible; but if the scope be not duly considered, everything becomes obscure, however clear and obvious its meaning may really be." (*Home, vol. 2, p. 265.*)

Our third principle, then, reads: *Make sure of the object or leading thought.* Its importance cannot be over-estimated. From its neglect many wrong interpretations have arisen. Even as great a man as Luther fell into egregious errors respecting the epistle of St. James, from want of its proper application. A not inconsiderable number of exegetes have held that James contradicts Paul in Romans respecting the doctrine of justification, when, in fact, they beautifully supplement each other, James showing that a dead faith, *i. e.*, a faith not accompanied by the fruits of the Spirit, cannot justify a man, and Paul arguing that a genuine, living faith in Christ alone can justify before God.

How shall we find out a writer's object? Of course we can never hit upon it without searching, and where shall we search for it but in the writing? Carefully reading an author, we shall, perhaps, find the aim he has in view expressly stated. In chapter 20: 31 of his Gospel, John explicitly tells us: "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ,

the Son of God, and that, believing, ye might have life through his name." In such cases, of course, we need search no longer. Most frequently, however, the writer's aim must be gathered from the contents of his book, and it takes a careful reading of each chapter and verse to gain the point. Even an oft-repeated perusal may be necessary, and it will be found very expedient to read a *whole book through at one sitting*. You cannot see the full beauty of a painting by only studying its parts in detail; you must take it in as a whole, and thus observe the main idea of the artist shed its radiant glory over all the parts. So, by reading a book at one sitting, the contents will leave their impress on the mind as a whole, and that will be likely to stand forth most prominent on which the writer has put greatest stress. Let no one call this impracticable. Most books, at least of the New Testament, are not so long but that they can be easily thus read, and the expense of time will find its bountiful reward. We may consult also the opinions of others, but we ought never to do this to the exclusion of our own endeavors. Of course, other things being equal, he who knows most, especially of the circumstances under which a book was written, and of the beliefs, manners and customs of the time when so written, will be best able to find the scope.

Not only the whole of a book, each chapter or (greater or smaller) part of one, has its leading idea, which must be ascertained in order to the full understanding of the rest. Generally, each Sunday-school lesson is chosen on this principle, and very often (not always) the main thought is found in the Golden Text. We should then make it ours, and make the lesson glow in its light.

#### FOURTH PRINCIPLE.

The sacred authors do not systematize, in the proper sense of that word. Their aim is not to give us parts of a system of doctrine, so that the Bible, as a whole, would be that system. Still, if they follow a certain object, if they have a leading thought in view, it plainly seems natural that this object will exert an influence on the manner in which they execute their work, on the grouping and arrangement of their thoughts.



Our fourth principle, then, may be styled *the law of relativity, or the law of relative values*. The statement which I have seen or heard more than one good man make, that all the Bible contains is equally important, is certainly very erroneous. Who could for a moment seriously compare and call equally valuable, John 3: 16 and a genealogical verse in Chronicles? What expositor would be looked up to as an authority who should aver that even Rom. 1: 19-21 were of as grave import as any other three verses of the entire epistle? Their evident bearing is to show that the vile and depraved lives of the heathen peoples are the cause of their idolatry and superstition—that they are inexcusable for not having at least some knowledge of the true and only God, and that they are, therefore, under his just condemnation. Not the doctrine of God's existence, as such, is here set forth, but God's existence taken for granted as, I had almost said, a self-evident truth, it is made use of as a basis for the clearer exposition of the great fundamental doctrine of this epistle, viz., *justification of the sinner by faith in Christ alone*.

Having ascertained the leading thought of a book or Sunday-school lesson, it devolves upon us to find out the relation in which the different parts stand to this thought, and then to give each the prominence to which this relation entitles it, and no more. It will not do to bestow as much attention upon minor details as upon the great truths which are intended to excite our interest and stir us up to action. What folly, *e. g.*, in the lesson in Acts 18: 1-17, to endeavor to determine whether the one year and six months, in verse 11, cover the whole period of Paul's stay in Corinth, or only that after the riot, and thus curtail the time for matters infinitely weightier! Think of quarreling over the mode of baptism in Acts 19: 5, and neglecting, in proportion, the great question of spiritual baptism—just about as prudent as would be a *thorough discussion* of the best method to rescue a man just fallen into the river, and leaving him, meanwhile, to the mercy of the water! The law of relative values, then, should be rigidly adhered to. To assign each thing its proper place, and to be able to put upon each of a number of various truths the proper rela-

tive estimate, is proof of a discriminating judgment of an able mind. Be sure you understand the relative importance of each verse, fact or truth of the lesson, and then give it its appropriate attention.

#### FIFTH PRINCIPLE.

It reads thus: *Make use of anything that helps to explain and illustrate the sacred page, or to enforce its precepts.*

The first law under this head is *the law of language*. Language is the vehicle of thought. You cannot get the weight of the latter if you are ignorant of the former. Some men are born linguists, *i. e.*, without much study they possess a ready supply of words to express their ideas, and meet with no great trouble in explaining the thoughts of a lesson, while others are in greater need of the dictionary and the grammar, to make sure of their statements. But, obviously, both ought to be able to distinguish between subject, predicate and object, and ought to pass by no word, the meaning of which they have not made their own. It will not do to hitch the horse behind the cart, or to have no proper knowledge of the tools employed in your work. Aptness to teach presupposes knowledge of *what*, and the means or manner *how* to teach, in either of which language occupies a conspicuous place.

It cannot, of course, be expected that every one possess a knowledge of the original languages of the Scriptures, but it is well to make use of the best substitute for such knowledge. A comparison of the English and German versions for such as are versant with both languages, or a comparison of the old with the new English version, will be found exceedingly serviceable. The different ways in which the original is expressed in these various versions is often suggestive of a wealth of thought not thus called forth by one version alone. The Sunday-school teacher should with eagerness employ this means of increased usefulness.

*Come to the teaching of your lesson with a knowledge of sacred geography*, is the second law of the fifth principle. The nature of a country has much to do with the character of its people, and indelibly imprints itself upon the pages of the

national literature. The poets make a hundred allusions to mountain, hill and dale, to river, lake and sea, to flower, shrub and tree, which fail of their effect if the reader is unacquainted with the geographical peculiarities of the poet's home. In the Bible we find frequent allusions to the Sea of Galilee, the Dead Sea, and the Mediterranean, and sometimes in such a manner that only he who is "at home" in Palestine finds no difficulty in observing which one is intended. Expressions like "cedars of Lebanon," "bulls of Bashan," "pride of the Jordan," "rose of Sharon," and many other similar ones, must remain an enigma to him who is a stranger in sacred geography; and what increased charm it lends to the Gospel history to be able to portray to one's self the site of Bethlehem, the cavern and manger of the nativity; to follow the Lord to Nazareth and to Capernaum, and across the lake, and on Mount Tabor, and into Jerusalem; to see him sit on the Mount of Olives and point to the grand Temple to foretell its doom — the Temple where he so often taught, and which he made glorious by his presence as the Old Testament Shekinah never could! Be sure, then, to acquaint yourself with the Holy Land, its ancient cities and villages, if you would not be without the pleasure of many a beautiful thought and many a grand inspiration from Nature's depths.

*Learn to understand the manners and customs of Bible times and peoples*, reads the third law under this head. The habitual way in which a man does a thing is an indication of the mode of his thinking and being, or of his character. You can tell what he means, even if he says not a word. There are national modes of thinking and action, which each individual (perhaps) unconsciously follows. Much that is said and written is a sealed book to us if we cannot view it in the light of such modes.

The Jewish people, especially in a country so secluded and isolated as much as they were from the rest of the world, were very peculiar in this respect. Their dwelling-houses, places of business, public buildings and amusements; manner of preparing their meals, of doing their daily work, of living together under the same roof and in the same

family; the relation they sustained to each other as fellow-townsmen, or as members of the same Church and nation; the manner in which they waged war, dispensed justice, celebrated their religious and national festivals, their marriage ceremonies and funeral rites; their laws respecting slavery and the poor, and regulating the marriage and family relationship — are all of a peculiar type, with the stamp of the *Jewish* nationality very conspicuously upon them. This peculiarity must be mastered, understood, and passages where such manners come into play must be viewed not in the light of our, but in the light of those times.

Of course, the principle source of information is the Bible itself. Contemporary history, too, is of value. The Sunday-school teacher ought to have a good book on Bible manners and customs (Freeman's, *e. g.*, or Barrow's Sacred Geography and Antiquities\*) always at hand for consultation when "preparing the lesson."

#### SIXTH PRINCIPLE.

The interpretation or explaining of Scripture is not an end in itself; it is only the means to an end, viz., of understanding "what thou readest." As the digging of a well is for the purpose of getting water, so the elucidation of the sacred text by all available means has for its object to get at the mind of the Spirit, and thus to the Fountain of light and life and salvation. The spiritual welfare of his pupil is what the teacher has in view, and, in order to reach this goal, he must impart Bible truth in such a manner as not only to enlighten the understanding, but also to sway the conscience and the will. He must, then, adapt his exposition to the pupil's capacity and needs. Thus, the sixth principle reads:

*Bring the Bible home to the pupil's mind and heart by viewing it in the light of the present hour.*

The Bible must be a present truth to us, if it is to do us

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\* BIBLICAL ANTIQUITIES, prepared especially for the Evangelical Normal Course, will be found of great value for its short and well illustrated descriptions.—ED.

good, if it is to mould our characters and lives, and it was given for this very purpose. Its truths must be a present, living reality—must be so perceived, so felt. How can they be but by finding out one's own sinfulness, one's need of a Saviour, the way of believing in him and appropriating his merits, and the manner of walking in his footsteps? The past, then, and the present must be brought together; the latter must be filled, as it were, by the former. In other words, the Bible, if rightly read, is a book for all time; it speaks the language of every age, and it is the language of our time and day that it is to speak, according to our sixth principle.

Make use of history, of science, of literature, of the present day, to illustrate its truths. Let incidents of every-day life—illustrations the force of which the pupil will readily see—throw their glow of light and life on the lesson taught. In the lesson, 1 Cor. 8: 1-13, it will not do merely to explain the condition of things in the church of Corinth—why the weak were easily offended, and why the strong, for their sake, should deny themselves in a matter which else they might practice with a good conscience; the lesson of self-denial must be made plain and inculcated by what even a little boy can comprehend—illustrations that will readily suggest themselves even to those learning. When you ask a boy, "What would you do, if little Freddie were so tired and worn out, on his journey, that he could hardly walk any further; would you let him fall or remain behind?" he will at once answer: "No, sir; I would lead him by the hand, or, if I could, I would carry him;" and then the way is open for the application. So the strong Christian should assist his weak brother, and not do something that he might misunderstand, take offence at, and possibly sin and go to ruin.

So, let me repeat: read the Bible to your pupils in the language of to-day

## FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY.

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BY REV. JACOB SMITH.

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There are two classes of evidence, which have an important bearing upon the establishment of the truth of the sacred Scriptures, the experimental or fulfillment of promise, and the external or fulfillment of prophecy. There is this difference, however, between these two kinds of evidence, that the fulfillment of prophecy is dependent upon no condition apart from the will of God, while the fulfillment of promise is based upon certain conditions, which are dependent upon the choice and conduct of man. A prophecy *must* be fulfilled, if the author of it is true, while a promise may remain unfulfilled, on account of the unfaithfulness of those to whom it is made, and yet the author's character for veracity remain unchallenged. This is why some of the richest promises of the Bible are not fulfilled in the experience of many.

The fulfillment of prophecy is an acknowledged proof of divine inspiration. In 1 Sam. 3: 20 we read: "And all Israel, from Dan to Beer-she-ba, *knew* that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord." In the preceding verse we learn *how* they came to know it: "And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and did *let none of his words fall to the ground.*" And in the days of king Ahab, the prophet Micaiah, after being warned not to prophesy evil against the King of Israel, said: "As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me that will I speak." Micaiah then told king Ahab that he should be slain in the encounter at Ramoth-Gilead, whereupon the king commanded, saying: "Take this fellow and put him in the prison,

and feed him with the bread and water of affliction, until I come in peace." Then Micaiah said to the king: "If thou return at all in peace, *the Lord hath not spoken by me.*"

Now, if the prophecies of the received canon of Scripture be not exactly fulfilled, then God hath not spoken to man by them, and on the other hand, if those predictions are all, in their time, precisely and completely fulfilled, we have the strongest possible evidence, aside from our own conscious experience, that *God speaks to us in the Bible.*"

Many of the prophetic portions of the Bible are yet obscure to us, and doubtless many are yet unfulfilled, but of those which are clear and refer to events which should have occurred prior to the present time, there is not one prediction which does not run parallel with the records of history, given to us by sacred and profane, and even by infidel historians. We wish to notice in the following pages only a few of the most prominent.

Gen. 49: 10.—The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

The Jewish Targums explain the "Shiloh" of this passage to mean the promised Messiah, and all the ancient Jews regarded this as a prediction of the coming of Christ. By the "sceptre" we understand a superiority in the affairs of government over the other tribes of Israel. Now, when Jacob uttered this prediction, Judah had no preëminence over his brethren, and it was 500 years before any of his descendants exercised a sovereign authority in the Jewish nation. Moses, the first ruler in Israel, was of the tribe of Levi, and Joshua, the next ruler, was of the tribe of Ephraim, and Saul, the first king of the nation, was of the tribe of Benjamin, and not until David was appointed king did Judah even begin to hold the sceptre. But from that hour till the coming of Christ, Judah maintained a distinct nationality, and exercised the functions of government, though all the other tribes were lost. Herod the Great was the last king of the Jews, who exercised regal authority, and *in the last year of Herod the Great Jesus was born.* From that time to the present day the "people" have

been "gathering unto Him," and the prediction is being daily verified before our eyes.

Deut. 28: 49, 50.—The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old nor show favor to the young.

Here we have a minute description of the nation that should overthrow the government of the Jews, and bring about the destruction of their holy city and devastate their country. Now every one who is acquainted with history, knows that Palestine was subjugated by the Roman empire, the fourth and last universal monarchy, and that Jerusalem was besieged and destroyed by Titus, a Roman general, in the 70th year of the Christian era. How accurately does Moses describe this event 1521 years before it transpired, and, indeed, many centuries before the foundations of the Roman empire were laid. He says it should be "a nation from far, from the end of the earth." In the invasion of the Romans, the soldiers were taken from France, Spain and Britain, which were far away from Palestine, and to them "the end of the earth." "A nation," he says, "as swift as the eagle flieth." The Roman army were noted in history for the amazing swiftness of their movements, by which they nearly always surprised their enemies. Then notice how the expression of the prophet corresponds with the standard of the Roman nation, which was the eagle. But he adds, it shall be "a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand." The language of the Romans was Latin, a language of which the people of Palestine were as ignorant, at that time, as of modern English, and a language as unlike the Hebrew as any other ever spoken. "A nation," he further says, "of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old nor show favor to the young." Josephus describes the Roman soldiers as "bold, warlike and strong," and their unmerciful and indiscriminate slaughter of old and young, women and children has left its dark stain upon the pages of history.



Deut. 28: 56, 57.—The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not have adventured to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, shall eat her children which she shall bear, for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.

This is one of the most terrible prophecies on record, and yet in Josephus' "Wars of the Jews" you will find this awful prediction verified. He says he would not write it, but it was well known and attested. He declares that *a woman of high rank actually slew her own child for food!* And this was likely but one of many similar instances of horrid brutality which occurred during the siege of Jerusalem.

Deut. 28: 63, 64.—And ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even to the other.

The fulfillment of this prophecy is witnessed by every nation upon the face of the earth, and it stands out before the eyes of all the world as a perpetual miracle, and a standing monument of the truth of the Bible. In all parts of the inhabited portion of the globe the Jew can be found, and he remains distinctively a *Jew*, in whatever country he lives, or in whatever circumstances he may be placed; and this can be said of no other people under heaven. The Jews present to the world the strange anomaly of history, of being a nation without a country; a fact which challenges the wisdom of the most learned philosophers, and finds no possible explanation independent of the Word and providence of God.

Deut. 28: 68. — And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.

How particular he is to specify the very means of conveyance, that they should be transported by ships, and not by land, though the distance to Egypt was not great; and how paradoxical the statement that they should be sold unto their enemies, and no man should buy them; yet all this was literally fulfilled more than 1,500 years after it was uttered. His-

tory informs us that at the time of the war the Romans had a fleet on the Mediterranean, and Josephus relates in book 6 of the "Wars of the Jews," that "Titus grew negligent, and his soldiers grew weary of killing them, and sold the rest of the multitude, with their wives and children, at a very low price, because such as were sold were very many, and the buyers were few, and the number of those that were sold was immense." And afterward he states, "As for the rest of the multitude, Fronto (a general under Titus) put them into bonds and sent them to the Egyptian mines." So we see that they were sold for slaves until the market was supplied, and the buyers became so few that at last *no man would buy them*.

Now, how did Moses know that such would be the sad lot of God's chosen people? This question can have but one answer. *God told him.*

Daniel 9: 26. — The people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.

Titus, the Roman general, was the prince referred to here, and his soldiers "the people of the prince." Now, it is remarkable that the prophecy should designate so minutely that not the prince, but the "*people* of the prince should destroy the city and the sanctuary," which exactly accords with the account of the destruction of Jerusalem, given by Josephus, who states that "Titus gave orders to his soldiers to spare the temple, but when they had gotten within the walls of the city, they were seized with a kind of frenzy, and hurling firebrands upon that magnificent edifice, it was, with the city, soon laid in ruins."

Daniel 9: 27.—He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.

Now, the religion of the Jews was distinctively a religion of sacrifices, and yet this prediction indicated a complete abolition of that system of sacrifices which God himself had appointed for their temple service; yet how accurately has it been fulfilled in the utter obliteration of the Levitical offerings! As the sacrifices and offerings were made only in Jerusalem, and that city having been given into the possession of the Gentiles, the "sacrifice and the oblation" literally ceased when the

temple was destroyed; and the fires on Jewish altars have not been rekindled for 1800 years. There are thousands of Jews living in the world at this time, who hold tenaciously to the principles of the ceremonial law as delivered by Moses; but where are the sacrifices and oblations of the Jew to-day? Verily, this prophecy also is being fulfilled before our eyes.

Micah 5: 2.—But thou Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel.

Now, *just at the right time*, without ever thinking of the Messiah, the emperor of Rome issued a decree that made it necessary for "Joseph, and Mary," the mother of Jesus, to leave their home in Nazareth, and go to Bethlehem to be enrolled. While there, the Redeemer was born, and the prophecy fulfilled.

Isa. 35: 5, 6. — The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; the lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.

In this passage the miracles of mercy performed by our Saviour when he was upon the earth were distinctly foretold more than seven centuries prior to the time of their occurrence. Jesus silenced the questioning of John the Baptist with reference to his own Messiahship by referring to the fulfillment of this very prophecy, saying, "Go and tell John that the *blind receive their sight* and the *lame walk*; the lepers are cleansed, and the *deaf hear*; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them." And in Matthew 15: 30, 31 we learn that "great multitudes came unto him, having with them the lame, the blind, the dumb, the maimed and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet, and he healed them; insomuch that the multitude wondered when they say the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see, and they glorified the God of Israel."

Isa. 40: 11.—He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom.

How like a shepherd did Christ on two occasions actually feed the multitudes who came to hear him! and with what

tender care, during all his public life, did he dispense to the people that nobler food, the knowledge of eternal life! and with what a *literal* conformity to the prediction of Isaiah do we read in Mark 10: 13-16, And they brought young children to him that he should touch them, and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased and said unto them: Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."

Isa. 50: 6.—I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

Did anyone but Jesus ever do this? Search through the biographies of the world and see! Ah yes, there have been those who were smitten upon the back, whose hair were plucked from the cheek, and whose faces were defiled with the saliva of others; but who else ever *gave* his back to the smiters and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and *turned not his face away* from spitting! Be astonished, O my soul! The Son of God lays bare his back to be whipped with the scourge of Pilate, the King of heaven is slapped in the face with the puny hands of ruthless soldiers, and wretched mortals spit into the face of the Prince of Peace! How wonderful is this prophecy! how infinitely wonderful its fulfillment!

Isa. 53: 2. — He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

It is evident from the writings of Jewish Rabbis, as well as from the Gospel narrative, that the Jews all along expected their promised Messiah to appear in regal pomp and splendor, and to exercise the functions of a temporal prince, and bring into subjection the Gentile nations of the earth. That the Christ of the New Testament has disappointed their expectations is attested by their past and present rejection of his claims to the Messiahship. Yet how accurately does the character and conduct of Jesus, as portrayed in the Gospels, ans-

wer to the description given of him by one of their own prophets more than 2500 years ago!

Isa. 53: 3. — He is despised and rejected of men; . . . and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

No prediction ever uttered has been more strikingly fulfilled than this. He was in the world, and the world knew him not; he came unto his own, and his own received him not. The people cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him! Away with him, away with him!" and they preferred Barabbas, a condemned criminal before the meek and lowly Saviour. It was asked in derision, "Is not this the carpenter, the Son of Mary?" and it is recorded that even "all his disciples forsook him and fled." And for 1800 years the majority of the human family have rejected and despised the Son of God, and he is lightly esteemed by thousands at this very hour. Sinner, your unholy life is a commentary upon this prediction.

Isa. 53: 3. — A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

How conspicuously has this fact been exhibited in the story of the evangelists, who say that "he wept over the city" of Jerusalem and at the grave of Lazarus, and that he was "*grieved for the hardness of heart*" manifested by the Pharisees. And how striking the fulfillment in Gethsemane where he "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears," saying: "My soul is *exceeding sorrowful*, even unto death;" and upon the cross where his grief broke forth in the lamentation: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Isa. 53: 7. — He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

See how exactly this was fulfilled when he was upon trial, and false witnesses arose against him, and "the high-priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, *Answerest thou nothing?* What is it which these witness against thee? but *he held his peace and answered nothing*" (Mark 14: 60, 61). And when he was brought before Pilate, "the chief priests

accused him of many things, *but he answered nothing*; and Pilate asked him, saying, *Answerest thou nothing*; behold how many things they witness against thee! But *Jesus yet answered nothing*, so that Pilate marvelled" (Mark 15: 3-5).

Such a beautiful example of meekness and patience is nowhere else to be found in the annals of history.

Isa. 53: 9. -- And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.

Hengstenberg renders this passage, "They appointed him his grave with the wicked, but he was with a rich man after his death," and Fausset says, "they *intended* by crucifying him with two thieves, that he should have his grave with the wicked, the denial of honorable burial being accounted a great ignominy." But God himself conducted the obsequies of that funeral, and every one of the evangelists is particular in recording that "Joseph, a rich counsellor, buried the body of Jesus in his own new tomb," and John says that Nicodemus, another ruler, and doubtless a rich man, assisted Joseph in this ceremony. These two men and the two Marys, who sat over against the sepulchre, were the only human attendants at the funeral of our Saviour, but no doubt the holy angels filled up the procession.

Isa. 53: 9. -- Because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

No other character has ever passed through the millionth part of the crucial test to which the character of the Lord Jesus has been subjected; and yet, from the time that Pilate said "*I find in him no fault at all*" until this very moment, his enemies have signally failed to fasten upon him the least stain of guilt. It was never predicted of any other human being that he should live a spotless life, and no other human being ever lived such a life; and we hardly know which to admire most, the *power* that manifested such a life, or the *wisdom* that foretold it 700 years prior to its manifestation.

Isa. 53: 10. -- When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand

The resurrection of Christ was the beginning and pledge of the fulfillment of this sublime prediction, and the multiplied thousands, who have been saved from sin through his sacrificial offering since that day are living testimonials of its truth and inspiration.

Isa. 53: 12. — And he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Notice the literal fulfillment of this in his crucifixion, when he was placed upon the cross between two criminals, and "made intercession for the transgressors," as we learn from Luke 23: 32-34. "And there were also two others, malefactors, led with him;"—mark they were *led with him*, so that he was "numbered with" them,— "to be put to death. And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Matt. 24: 2. — And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily, I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.

It is said that the stones of the temple were 50 feet long, 24 feet broad, and 16 feet thick, and were bound together with lead, and fastened with strong iron cramps; and yet history informs us that this prediction was fulfilled to the very letter, and that Turnus Rufus plowed up the very ground on which the temple stood.

Matt. 24: 21. — Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Now, let any one read the eighth chapter of book 6, of the "Wars of the Jews," and he will be convinced that the tribulation of the Jews in the siege of Jerusalem has never had its parallel in the records of human history.

In his preface to Jewish Wars, Josephus says, "It appears to me that *the misfortunes of all men, from the beginning of the world*, if they be compared to these of the Jews, are not so

considerable as they were. This makes it impossible for me to contain my lamentations." Josephus did not know that he employed the very language of our Saviour's prediction, in describing what Jesus had foretold.

Matt. 24: 22.—But for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Tacitus, the historian, says that Titus was anxious to bring the siege to an end, being more desirous to enjoy the riches and pleasures of Rome; and Titus himself could not refrain from ascribing his success to the overruling providence of God, when he viewed the fortifications after the city was taken. He said: "We have fought with God on our side; and it is God who hath pulled the Jews out of these strong-holds; for what could the hands of men or machines do against these towers?"

Luke 21: 11.—And fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

Josephus says in his Jewish Wars, "While the Jews, miserable people, allowed themselves to be persuaded by deceivers, they did not attend nor give credit to the *signs* that were so evident, and did so plainly foretell their future desolation." And then he relates that a star, resembling a sword, stood over the city, that chariots and armies fighting in the clouds were seen in the evening, and that at the ninth hour of the night a great light shone around the altar and the temple; that the priests heard a voice like that of a multitude, as they entered the inner temple, saying "LET US DEPART HENCE," and that the eastern gate of the temple which required twenty men to shut it, was seen at the sixth hour of the night to open of its own accord, though it had been fastened by strong bars and bolts.

Luke 21: 24.—Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

For 1800 years this prediction has been verified, and the Gentiles have had possession of the holy city, and have trodden it under their feet. The Emperor Hadrian caused the ruins of Jerusalem to be utterly destroyed, and the ground on which it



stood was plowed up and a new city built in its place. And when Julian, the wicked apostate, was emperor of Rome, he made an attempt to falsify this very prophecy of the Saviour by calling upon the Jews to rebuild their temple at Jerusalem. Men, women and children flocked to him from all quarters of the empire and began to work at the new temple, but their work was suddenly interrupted by mysterious eruptions of balls of fire bursting out of the earth beneath them, driving them away and causing them to abandon the attempt; so jealous is the God of heaven over the words of his Son, who declared that "*heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*"

We now call the attention to the testimony of a noted French infidel, Mr. C. F. Volney, who traveled over Palestine and the adjacent countries, and afterward wrote a journal of "Travels in Syria and Egypt" and "The Ruins of Empires," in which he describes the desolation of Judea in language so perfectly in accordance with the predictions of that desolation recorded in the Bible, that it almost seems as if God had employed him to write a commentary upon the prophecies. In the first place, I will show that Mr. Volney himself was compelled by the force of circumstances, to admit that the country of Judea was at one time much more populous and prosperous than it is now, just as the Bible said it was. He says: "There is nothing to contradict the great population of high antiquity. Without appealing to the positive testimony of history, there are innumerable monuments which depose in favor of the fact. Such are the prodigious quantity of ruins dispersed over the plains, and even in the mountains, at this day deserted. On the remote parts of Carmel are found wild vines and olive trees, which must have been conveyed thither by the hand of man; and in the Lebanon of the Druses and Maronites, the rocks, now abandoned to fir trees and brambles, present us in a thousand places with terraces, which prove that they were *anciently better cultivated*, and consequently *much more populous than in our days.*"

Lev. 26: 32. — I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it.

Jer. 18 : 16. — Every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished.

Volney says: "So feeble a population in so excellent a country may well excite our *astonishment*; but this will be increased, if we compare the present number of inhabitants with that of ancient times."

Lev. 26 : 33. — And your land shall be desolate.

Lev. 26 : 34. — Then shall the land rest.

Volney says: "I have traversed *this desolate country*." And in another place he says: "The art of cultivation is in the *most deplorable state*; and the countryman must sow with the musket in his hand, and no more is sown than is necessary for subsistence. Every day I find *fields abandoned by the plough*."

Ezek. 7 : 21, 22. — I will give it into the hands of strangers for a prey, and unto the wicked of the earth for a spoil. The robbers shall enter into it and defile it.

Now see how Mr. Volney makes use of the very language of Scripture in describing the event which was foretold in the above passage. He says: "Within two thousand five hundred years we may reckon *ten invasions*, which have introduced into Syria a *succession of foreign nations*." And again he says: "When the Ottomans took Syria from the Mamelukes, they considered it as the *spoil* of a vanquished enemy. According to this law, the life and property of the vanquished belonged to the conqueror. The government is far from disapproving a system of *robbery and plunder*, which it finds so profitable."

Lev. 26 : 22. — Your highways shall be desolate.

Isa. 33 : 8. — The highways lie waste; the wayfaring man ceaseth.

Volney says: "In the interior part of the country there are neither great roads nor canals, nor even bridges over the greatest part of the rivers and torrents. *Nobody travels alone*. Between town and town there are *neither posts nor public conveyances*. The roads in the mountains are *extremely bad*; and the inhabitants are so far from levelling them, that they

*endeavor to make them more rugged*, in order, as they say, to cure the Turks of their desire to introduce their cavalry. It is remarkable that *there is not a wagon nor a cart in all Syria.*"

Isa. 32: 13. — Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers.

Volney says: "The earth produces *only briers and worm-wood.*"

Isa. 32: 14. — The forts and towers shall be for dens forever.

Volney says: "At every step we met with ruins of *towers, dungeons, and castles*, with fosses, frequently *inhabited by jackals, owls, and scorpions.*"

Isa. 33: 9.—Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down.

Volney says: "Among the crags of the rocks (on Lebanon) may be seen the *no very magnificent remains of the boasted cedars.*" c

Lev. 26: 31.—I will make your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries into desolation.

Amos 3: 11.—Thy palaces shall be spoiled.

Jer. 4: 27.—The whole land shall be desolate.

Jer. 6: 8.—Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited.

Now, observe, how in one short sentence Volney describes the complete fulfillment of the above predictions. He says:

*"The temples are thrown down; the palaces demolished; the ports filled up; the towns destroyed, and the earth, stripped of inhabitants, seems a dreary dwelling-place."*

Zeph. 2: 5, 6.—O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy you: The sea-coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks.

Volney says: "In the plain between Ramla and Gaza" (the plain of the *Philistines*, along the *sea-coast*), "the houses are so many huts, sometimes ranged in the form of cells around a court yard, enclosed by a mud wall. In the Winter *they and the cattle may be said to live together*, the part of the dwelling allotted for themselves being only two feet above that in which they lodge their beasts."

Jer. 12: 10.—Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot.

Volney has a chapter in one of his books entitled, "Of the pastoral or wandering tribes of Syria." He says: "The Turkmen, the Curds, and the Bedouins have no fixed habitations, but keep *perpetually wandering with their tents and herds*. The Arabs spread over the whole portion of Syria, and even the plain of Palestine."

Ezek. 12: 20.—And the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste.

Volney says: "Every day I found in my route villages deserted and *cities in ruins*."

Ezek. 26: 5.—Tyre shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the Sea.

Volney says: "Instead of that ancient commerce, so active and so extensive, Sour (Tyre) is reduced to a miserable village. They live obscurely on the produce of their little ground and *a trifling fishery*."

Deut. 29: 22, 25.—The generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land; even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers.

Now it is certainly a most remarkable coincidence, if it is not a direct fulfillment of this prophecy, that Mr. Volney should come from France, "*a stranger from a far land*," and that when he saw the plagues of that land," he should say, as he does, almost in the very language of Moses: "Good God! from whence proceed such melancholy revolutions? *For what cause is the fortune of these countries so strikingly changed? Why are so many cities destroyed? Why is not that ancient population reproduced and perpetuated? I wandered over the country; I traversed the provinces; I enumerated the kingdoms of Damascus and Idumea, of Jerusalem and Samaria. This Syria, said I to myself, now almost*

*depopulated*, then contained a hundred flourishing cities, and abounded with towns, villages and hamlets. What has become of so many productions of the hands of man? What has become of those ages of abundance and of life?" And in reply to these questions, forced even from the pen of an infidel, there are men living to-day who answer, in conformity with the prediction of Moses, "Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers."

How significant also is the fact that a believer in the Bible did not pen the language of Volney quoted above; lest the sneering skeptic should say: "He wrote it with the prophecy of Moses before him, and on purpose to confirm that prophecy." But it is probable that Mr. Volney did not know that such language was ever ascribed to Moses, or if he did, it is certain that he did not believe that Moses ever uttered it. "BUT THEIR ROCK IS NOT AS OUR ROCK, EVEN OUR ENEMIES THEMSELVES BEING JUDGES."

Amos 9: 8, 9.—Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord. For lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.

Here we learn that though the *kingdom* of Israel was to be destroyed from the earth, and the *people scattered* among all nations, yet they should never be *consumed* from the earth or their name perish; and this fact has stood out as the wonder of history for 1800 years. Other wicked nations have been *utterly* destroyed in a comparatively short space of time, and their memorial has perished forever; and yet, notwithstanding the bitter and unrelenting hatred of nearly all the world against the Jews, the fierce and protracted persecutions which they have suffered, the incessant banishments to which they have been subjected, and the almost intolerable hardships through which they have passed, they exist to-day in as great a number as when they were first plucked off from their own land. They have been "sifted," and they are now in the "sieve," yet not the "least grain" has been lost. Surely this is a *miracle*

of history as great and as unaccountable on natural principles as any *miracle of nature* recorded in the Scriptures; so that those skeptical persons who will not believe the Bible "until they see a miracle" in attestation of its truth, have but to *open their eyes*, and they will have the proof they demand; for the past history and present condition of that people present to the world a problem which to human philosophy or political economy can unravel.

Malachi 1: 11.—From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.

Now, at the time this prophecy was uttered, the *name* of the true God was little known anywhere upon the earth, except among the Jews, and a *pure* religious devotion had almost become extinct among *them*, so unlikely was this event to occur; and yet in less than 8000 years after the prediction was uttered, so complete a revolution had been wrought by the introduction and rapid spread of the Gospel among the nations of the earth, that "from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same"—*i. e.*, over all the Eastern hemisphere—the name of the Lord was great among the Gentiles. And we have but to look out over the map of the world, and note the progress of Christianity, to see how grandly his prophecy is being fulfilled at the present time. I verily believe that there are millions of Christians living to-day all around the globe, who are so *sincere* in their devotion to God, that, were it necessary, they would be willing to sacrifice their lives for the name of the Lord. *No other name* has such power over the hearts of men.

Isa. 65: 15.—Ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name.

Isa. 62: 2.—The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.

The former of these passages was addressed to the Jews, and

the latter to the true church of God, and how complete has been their fulfillment!

Nearly every person is familiar with the fact that the name of "Jew," by which the people of God had been distinguished for many generations, has become a term of reproach and a synonym of cursing among the nations of the earth, and that the servants of the Lord are called in all lands to-day by the common name of "Christian," a name which was first given to the disciples of Christ immediately after the door of the church was opened to receive the Gentiles. (See Acts 10 and 11.)

Jer. 35: 19.—Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Hosts, the God of Israel, Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before me forever.

Now it has been ascertained that "this people still exist, a separate people, in the midst of Turks and Arabs, yet not Mohammedans, but worshipers of the true God according to the Old Testament." Some years ago, Joseph Wolf, a missionary, was in Mesopotamia, and while conversing with the Jews, he saw a man standing a little distance away, holding a horse by the bridle. "There is one of the Rechabites," said the Jews. The missionary went up to him, and in reply to his inquiry the man said: "I am Mousa," and turning to the thirty-fifth chapter of Jeremiah in a Bible which the missionary had handed to him, he read the whole chapter and said: "Here is my lineage; come with me, and I will show you that we number sixty thousand at the present day." We have in these facts, besides a wonderful verification of Scripture prophecy, a record of the oldest "temperance society" in the world.

Numbers 23: 9.—Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.

At the time this prediction was uttered, the people of Israel were wandering in the wilderness, without any established form of government, and were little known to the world, and it was the first time that Balaam had ever seen them, and then only at a distance; and yet, in that short sentence is depicted the most distinguishing feature of the history of the Jewish nation from that time to the present day, covering a period of

more than 3,300 years. That the Jews have always been a *peculiar people*, separate from all the rest of the world in manners and customs, and that though they have been scattered for centuries among all the nations of the earth, they have not been "reckoned among the nations" by losing their own nationality, is a matter of common history; and that they now "dwell alone," and, unlike all other people while mingling with foreign nations, retain their peculiar *national* traits of character, and "reckon" themselves, and are "reckoned" by others, as *distinct* from all the people among whom they dwell, is a matter of every-day observation before the eyes of all the world.

Numbers 23: 23.—According to this time it shall be said of Jacob and Israel, "What hath God wrought!"

This language plainly implies that the wonderful interventions of Providence in behalf of the people of Israel, should be a theme of admiration to succeeding generations. And so it *has* been from that time until the present moment, not only among the Jews themselves, but among all who have ever made their history a subject of meditation. The many portions of Scripture which express the very *thought* of the above prediction, are read in millions of homes to-day, and the wonderful dealings of God to that ancient people are made the theme of thousands of sermons, treatises, and Sabbath-school lessons, so that the prediction is literally fulfilled in all parts of the Christian world at this time. And we have reason to believe that the history of God's chosen people will be a theme of admiration and song after the name of America shall be forgotten.

Numbers 24: 17. — There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel.

Though this language doubtless points to the rule of king David, who did actually "smite the corners of Moab," and took "Edom for a possession" (See 2 Sam. 8: 2, 14), yet it certainly received a more complete fulfillment in a nativity of our Saviour, who is called in the Scriptures, "the Day-star," "the Morning-star" and "the Bright and Morning-star;" and



a star did actually appear at the scene of Christ's advent into the world, and it is affirmed by Origen and Eusebius that "it was in consequence of Balaam's prophecies, which were known and believed in the East, that the Magi, upon the appearance of a new star, came to Jerusalem to worship him who was born King of the Jews."

Numbers 24 : 20. — And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish forever.

The Lord had before threatened the same denunciation against them by the pen of Moses, saying (Exodus 17 : 14), "Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua, for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." This sentence has been executed to the very letter; for after several victories achieved over them under the reign of Saul and David, they were *utterly* vanquished "in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah," when "the sons of Simeon smote the rest of the Amalekites that were escaped and dwelt in their inhabitations" (1 Chron. 4 : 41-43); and, in the words of Bishop Newton, "Where is the name or the nation of Amalek subsisting at this day? What history, what tradition concerning them is remaining anywhere? They are but just enough known and remembered to show that what God had threatened he hath punctually fulfilled."

The prophecies of Balaam recorded in the 23d and 24th chapters of Numbers are the more remarkable from the fact of their being the utterance of an immoral and worldly man, who "loved the wages of unrighteousness," and "ran greedily after rewards;" and yet, when he was called upon to curse Israel under the tempting offer of royal gifts and worldly promotion, he was irresistibly impelled to pronounce a benediction upon that people, in language more majestic than the loftiest strains of uninspired poets. Upon the very face of this circumstance, independent of Balaam's confession, we have abundant evidence that God has spoken to the world by this unworthy instrument, as he had before spoken to Balaam by the mouth of the dumb beast upon which he rode.

Gen. 9: 26, 27. — Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

As the entire human family after the deluge descended from the three sons of Noah, this brief prophecy sketches the destiny of the whole world from the flood to the end of time. The expression, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem," is "an intimation," says a learned commentator, "that the descendants of Shem should be peculiarly honored in the service of the true God." How plainly was this fulfilled in the history of the ancient Jews, among whom the Church of the living God was established for many centuries, and "of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all God blessed forever." And in the light of Scripture prophecy there is yet a glorious future held out before the Jewish portion of the family of Shem in their final conversion to Christianity and restoration to the honors and privileges which the children of Israel once enjoyed as the peculiar people of God.

Then the prediction that "God shall enlarge Japheth" has been confirmed in a remarkable manner by the facts of universal history. Dr. Scott says that more than one-half of the human family have descended from Japheth, and the author of "The hand of God in History" says that the descendants of Japheth occupy all Europe, Asia Minor, America, many of the islands of the sea and the Northern portions of Asia. A line drawn on the map of the world, encircling the nations descended from Japheth, would enclose nearly all the Christianity in the world. And this enlargement is still going on before the eyes of all mankind at the present day, so that the most obdurate skeptic will be forced to admit that what Noah said more than four thousand years ago is true to-day. But the prophet adds: "He shall dwell in the tents of Shem;" and how remarkably is this "wonderful prophecy in a few words" being fulfilled at the present day! The people of Great Britain are the descendants of Japheth, while the people of India are the offspring of Shem. Now the British Government is established in India, and the Anglo-Saxons are in the ascendant from

Europe to India. Then the aborigines of this country were the children of Shem. But where the wigwams and villages of the red men stood three hundred years ago, the dwellings and cities of the children of Japheth now dot the American continent, and the prediction of Noah is abundantly verified. But the prophet also marked out the destiny of Canaan, or the descendants of Ham, as one of humiliation and servitude, by twice declaring that Canaan shall be his servant, that is, the servant of Shem, and of Japheth. Every Bible reader will note the fact that Canaan was the servant of *Shem* when the Jews had possession of the land of Canaan, for the people of that country were made their servants "either by conquest, or, like the Gibeonites, by submission." And modern history furnishes the fact that Canaan has been the servant of *Japheth*; for those in servitude have come chiefly from Africa, the country of Ham's descendants.

The world may be challenged to produce a specimen of composition, that will compare with this utterance of Noah in clearness, sublimity and comprehensiveness of statement. No human mind, unassisted by inspiration, could ever have indited the language, much less have foreseen the events, recorded in this remarkable passage.

Gen. 16 : 11, 12. — And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him: and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

The history of more than three thousand years has borne testimony to the truth of this prophecy, and it is being confirmed at the present day by the modern Arabs, a large portion of whom are the descendants of Ishmael. The character of the Ishmaelites is tersely foretold in the declaration that "he will be a wild man." Now it is well known that the inhabitants of Arabia are a wild, rude and independent people, having never sought nor cared for peaceable relations with surrounding nations, and the expression, "As wild as an Arab," has long been a common proverb. Living separate from the rest of mankind, and disdaining to learn anything from the more

civilized nations of the earth, they have always retained their original savage and untutored character. Then again, their warlike attitude and permanent national character, in the presence of other nations, are plainly depicted in the language: "His hand will be against every man, and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." A late author asserts that "for many centuries, the Bedouins, doubtless the purest descendants of Ishmael, regard themselves, and are regarded, as a peculiar race; asserting and enjoying a wild independence. To adopt their own morality, they do not rob; 'they take' or 'gain,' and travelers must unite in a caravan and arm themselves to cross the desert, their home, without being plundered." Again he says: "They have escaped or successfully resisted the armies that had conquered all the world besides. The Assyrians, Medes, and Persians gave up the conquest of Arabia in despair. Alexander the Great was insulted by them, and died when meditating their subjugation; and the iron-armed and iron-hearted Romans never subdued Arabia but in name."

Even the sneering infidel, Gibbon, in his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," after vainly trying to show that Arabia had been conquered, is forced to admit that "the body of the nation has escaped the yoke of the most powerful monarchies; the armies of Sesostrius and Cyrus, of Pompey and Trajan, could never achieve the conquest of Arabia; the present sovereign of the Turks may exercise a shadow of jurisdiction, but his pride is reduced to solicit the friendship of a people whom it is dangerous to provoke and fruitless to attack." At another place he declares, almost in the very phraseology of the Scripture prophecy, that they are "*armed against mankind.*" How truly has the word of the Lord to Hagar in the wilderness been fulfilled to the very letter! No one but God could have revealed to her the hidden secrets of centuries to come.

Deut. 31: 29. -- For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way, which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days.

Moses here makes a pretension of the most exalted character, and one which involves the direct inspiration of the Almighty; for he expresses no mere *conjecture* of the probable consequences that might result from passing events, but he professes to *know* what will be the moral character and temporal circumstances of the Jewish nation for *centuries after his death*. And *we* also know, not by *inspiration*, but by *observation*, that in these "latter days" every word of that prediction is literally true, though one hundred generations of the human family have come upon the stage of being since it was first uttered. The state of the Jews at this day is one of universal moral corruption, in which they have strangely departed from the precepts of the law of Moses, while all the time esteeming that code of laws above all the statutes of the nations among whom they dwell. That "evil has befallen them in the latter days" is evident from their national disintegration, their dispersion over all the earth, the almost universal contempt in which they are held, and the unmitigated cruelties which are heaped upon them. Verily Moses *knew* what he said, and the history of the present time bears witness to the divine authority of his writings.

And now, dear reader, I have collected only a few of the many precious gems of prophecy which are scattered among the treasures of God's holy word; but a sufficient number and variety have been grouped together, to show with unquestionable certainty, that the predictions recorded on the pages of the Bible have been infallibly fulfilled by the events which transpired hundreds and thousands of years after they were uttered, and that even *now*, in the evening of the nineteenth Christian century, the wheels of history are rolling in the track of ancient prophecy. A stronger array of testimony in proof of the divine origin and authority of the Scriptures cannot be reasonably demanded, and no candid mind can possibly entertain in the face of this evidence, the least shadow of doubt, that the prophecy "came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

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*Origin of the Bible.*

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